# THE LAW OF HUMAN PROGRESS

Henry George

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BY

HENRY GEORGE

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# The Law of Human Progress

What in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support;
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert eternal Providence
And justify the ways of God to men.

—*Milton.*

4098

# The Law of Human Progress

## I. What is the Law of Human Progress?

IF the conclusions with which I have challenged the current political economy are correct, they will fall under a larger generalization.

*What is the law of human progress?*

This is a question which involves, directly or indirectly, some of the very highest problems with which the human mind can engage. But it is a question which naturally comes up. Are or are not the conclusions to which we have come consistent with the great law under which human development goes on?

What is that law? We must find the answer to our question; for the current philosophy, though it clearly recognizes the existence of such a law, gives no more satisfactory account of it than the current political economy does of the persistence of want amid advancing wealth.

Let us, as far as possible, keep to the firm ground of facts. Whether man was or was not gradually developed from an animal, it is not necessary to inquire. However intimate may be the connection between questions which relate to man as we know him and questions which relate to his genesis, it is only from the former upon the latter that light can be thrown. Inference cannot proceed from the unknown to the known. It is only from facts of which we are cognizant that we can infer what has preceded cognizance.

However man may have originated, all we know of him is as man—just as he is now to be found. There is no record or trace of him in any lower condition than that in which savages are still to be met. By whatever bridge he may have crossed the wide chasm which now separates him from the brutes, there remain of it no vestiges. Between the lowest savages of whom we know and the highest animals, there is an irreconcilable difference—a difference not merely of degree, but of kind. Many of the characteristics, actions, and emotions of man are exhibited by the lower animals; but man, no matter how low in the scale of humanity, has never yet been found destitute of one thing of which no animal shows the slightest trace, a clearly recognizable but almost

undefinable something, which gives him the power of improvement—which makes him the progressive animal.

The beaver builds a dam, and the bird a nest, and the bee a cell; but while beavers' dams, and birds' nests, and bees' cells are always constructed on the same model, the house of the man passes from the rude hut of leaves and branches to the magnificent mansion replete with modern conveniences. The dog can to a certain extent connect cause and effect, and may be taught some tricks; but his capacity in these respects has not been a whit increased during all the ages he has been the associate of improving man, and the dog of civilization is not a whit more accomplished or intelligent than the dog of the wandering savage. We know of no animal that uses clothes, that cooks its food, that makes itself tools or weapons, that breeds other animals that it wishes to eat, or that has an articulate language. But men who do not do such things have never yet been found, or heard of, except in fable. That is to say, man, wherever we know him, exhibits this power—of supplementing what nature has done for him by what he does for himself; and, in fact, so inferior is the physical endowment of man, that there is no part

of the world, save perhaps some of the small islands of the Pacific, where without this faculty he could maintain an existence.

Man everywhere and at all times exhibits this faculty—everywhere and at all times of which we have knowledge he has made some use of it. But the degree in which this has been done greatly varies. Between the rude canoe and the steamship; between the boomerang and the repeating rifle; between the roughly carved wooden idol and the breathing marble of Grecian art; between savage knowledge and modern science; between the wild Indian and the white settler; between the Hottentot woman and the belle of polished society, there is an enormous difference.

The varying degrees in which this faculty is used cannot be ascribed to differences in original capacity —the most highly improved peoples of the present day were savages within historic times, and we meet with the widest differences between peoples of the same stock. Nor can they be wholly ascribed to differences in physical environment—the cradles of learning and the arts are now in many cases tenanted by barbarians, and within a few years great cities rise on the hunting grounds of wild tribes. All these

differences are evidently connected with social development. Beyond perhaps the veriest rudiments, it becomes possible for man to improve only as he lives with his fellows. All these improvements, therefore, in man's powers and condition we summarize in the term civilization. Men improve as they become civilized, or learn to co-operate in society.

What is the law of this improvement? By what common principle can we explain the different stages of civilization at which different communities have arrived? In what consists essentially the progress of civilization, so that we may say of varying social adjustments, this favors it, and that does not; or explain why an institution or condition which may at one time advance it may at another time retard it?

The prevailing belief now is, that the progress of civilization is a development or evolution, in the course of which man's powers are increased and his qualities improved by the operation of causes similar to those which are relied upon as explaining the genesis of species—viz., the survival of the fittest and the hereditary transmission of acquired qualities.

That civilization is an evolution—that it is, in the language of Herbert Spencer, a progress from an

indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity—there is no doubt; but to say this is not to explain or identify the causes which forward or retard it. How far the sweeping generalizations of Spencer, which seek to account for all phenomena under terms of matter and force, may, properly understood, include all these causes, I am unable to say; but, as scientifically expounded, the development philosophy has either not yet definitely met this question, or has given birth, or rather coherency, to an opinion which does not accord with the facts.

The vulgar explanation of progress is, I think, very much like the view naturally taken by the money maker of the causes of the unequal distribution of wealth. His theory, if he has one, usually is, that there is plenty of money to be made by those who have will and ability, and that it is ignorance, or idleness, or extravagance, that makes the difference between the rich and the poor. And so the common explanation of differences of civilization is of differences in capacity. The civilized races are the superior races, and advance in civilization is according to this superiority—just as English victories were, in common English opinion, due to the natural

superiority of Englishmen to frog-eating Frenchmen; and popular government, active invention, and greater average comfort are, or were until lately, in common American opinion, due to the greater "smartness of the Yankee Nation."

Now, just as the politico-economic doctrines which I have met and disproved, harmonize with the common opinion of men who see capitalists paying wages and competition reducing wages; just as the Malthusian theory harmonized with existing prejudices both of the rich and the poor; so does the explanation of progress as a gradual race improvement harmonize with the vulgar opinion which accounts by race differences for differences in civilization. It has given coherence and a scientific formula to opinions which already prevailed. Its wonderful spread since the time Darwin first startled the world with his "Origin of Species" has not been so much a conquest as an assimilation.

The view which now dominates the world of thought is this: That the struggle for existence, just in proportion as it becomes intense, impels men to new efforts and inventions. That this improvement and capacity for improvement is fixed by hereditary transmission, and extended by the ten-

dency of the best adapted individual, or most improved individual, to survive and propagate among individuals, and of the best adapted, or most improved tribe, nation, or race to survive in the struggle between social aggregates. On this theory the differences between man and the animals, and differences in the relative progress of men, are now explained as confidently, and all but as generally, as a little while ago they were explained upon the theory of special creation and divine interposition.

The practical outcome of this theory is in a sort of hopeful fatalism, of which current literature is full.* In this view, progress is the result of forces which work slowly, steadily and remorselessly, for the elevation of man. War, slavery, tyranny, superstition, famine, and pestilence, the want and misery which fester in modern civilization, are the impelling causes which drive man on, by eliminating

*In semi-scientific or popularized form this may perhaps be seen in best, because frankest, expression in "The Martyrdom of Man," by Winwood Reade, a writer of singular vividness and power. This book is in reality a history of progress, or, rather, a monograph upon its causes and methods, and will well repay perusal for its vivid pictures, whatever may be thought of the capacity of the author for philosophic generalization. The connection between subject and title may be seen by the conclusion: "I give to universal history a strange but true title—*The Martyrdom of Man.* In each generation the human race has been tortured that their children might profit by their woes. Our own prosperity is founded on the agonies of the past. Is it therefore unjust that we also should suffer for the benefit of those who are to come?"

poorer types and extending the higher; and hereditary transmission is the power by which advances are fixed, and past advances made the footing for new advances. The individual is the result of changes thus impressed upon and perpetuated through a long series of past individuals, and the social organization takes its form from the individuals of which it is composed. Thus, while this theory is, as Herbert Spencer says*—"radical to a degree beyond anything which current radicalism conceives;" inasmuch as it looks for changes in the very nature of man; it is at the same time "conservative to a degree beyond anything conceived by current conservatism," inasmuch as it holds that no change can avail save these slow changes in men's natures. Philosophers may teach that this does not lessen the duty of endeavoring to reform abuses, just as the theologians who taught predestinarianism insisted on the duty of all to struggle for salvation; but, as generally apprehended, the result is fatalism—"do what we may, the mills of the gods grind on regardless either of our aid or our hindrance." I allude to this only to illustrate what I take to be the opinion now rapidly spreading and permeating common

* "The Study of Sociology"—Conclusion.

thought; not that in the search for truth any regard for its effects should be permitted to bias the mind. But this I take to be the current view of civilization: That it is the result of forces, operating in the way indicated, which slowly change the character, and improve and elevate the powers of man; that the difference between civilized man and savage is of a long race education, which has become permanently fixed in mental organization; and that this improvement tends to go on increasingly, to a higher and higher civilization. We have reached such a point that progress seems to be natural with us, and we look forward confidently to the greater achievements of the coming race—some even holding that the progress of science will finally give men immortality and enable them to make bodily the tour not only of the planets, but of the fixed stars, and at length to manufacture suns and systems for themselves.*

But without soaring to the stars, the moment that this theory of progression, which seems so natural to us amid an advancing civilization, looks around the world, it comes against an enormous fact—the fixed, petrified civilizations. The majority of the human race to-day have no idea of progress; the

*Winwood Reade, "The Martyrdom of Man."

majority of the human race to-day look (as until a few generations ago our own ancestors looked) upon the past as the time of human perfection. The difference between the savage and the civilized man may be explained on the theory that the former is as yet so imperfectly developed that his progress is hardly apparent; but how, upon the theory that human progress is the result of general and continuous causes, shall we account for the civilizations that have progressed so far and then stopped? It cannot be said of the Hindoo and of the Chinaman, as it may be said of the savage, that our superiority is the result of a longer education; that we are, as it were, the grown men of nature, while they are the children. The Hindoos and the Chinese were civilized when we were savages. They had great cities, highly organized and powerful governments, literatures, philosophies, polished manners, considerable division of labor, large commerce, and elaborate arts, when our ancestors were wandering barbarians, living in huts and skin tents, not a whit further advanced than the American Indians. While we have progressed from this savage state to Nineteenth Century civilization, they have stood still. If progress be the result of fixed laws, inevitable and eternal, which

impel men forward, how shall we account for this?

One of the best popular expounders of the development philosophy, Walter Bagehot ("Physics and Politics"), admits the force of this objection, and endeavors in this way to explain it: That the first thing necessary to civilize man is to tame him; to induce him to live in association with his fellows in subordination to law; and hence a body or "cake" of laws and customs grows up, being intensified and extended by natural selection, the tribe or nation thus bound together having an advantage over those who are not. That this cake of custom and law finally becomes too thick and hard to permit further progress, which can go on only as circumstances occur which introduce discussion, and thus permit the freedom and mobility necessary to improvement.

This explanation, which Mr. Bagehot offers, as he says, with some misgivings, is, I think, at the expense of the general theory. But it is not worth while speaking of that, for it, manifestly, does not explain the facts.

The hardening tendency of which Mr. Bagehot speaks would show itself at a very early period of development, and his illustrations of it are nearly

all drawn from savage or semi-savage life. Whereas, these arrested civilizations had gone a long distance before they stopped. There must have been a time when they were very far advanced as compared with the savage state, and were yet plastic, free, and advancing. These arrested civilizations stopped at a point which was hardly in anything inferior and in many respects superior to European civilization of, say, the sixteenth or at any rate the fifteenth century. Up to that point then there must have been discussion, the hailing of what was new, and mental activity of all sorts. They had architects who carried the art of building, necessarily by a series of innovations or improvements, up to a very high point; ship-builders who in the same way, by innovation after innovation, finally produced as good a vessel as the war ships of Henry VIII.; inventors who stopped only on the verge of our most important improvements, and from some of whom we can yet learn; engineers who constructed great irrigation works and navigable canals; rival schools of philosophy and conflicting ideas of religion. One great religion, in many respects resembling Christianity, rose in India, displaced the old religion, passed into China, sweeping over that country, and was dis-

placed again in its old seats, just as Christianity was displaced in its first seats. There was life, and active life, and the innovation that begets improvement, long after men had learned to live together. And, moreover, both India and China have received the infusion of new life in conquering races, with different customs and modes of thought.

The most fixed and petrified of all civilizations of which we know anything was that of Egypt, where even art finally assumed a conventional and inflexible form. But we know that behind this must have been a time of life and vigor—a freshly developing and expanding civilization, such as ours is now—or the arts and sciences could never have been carried to such a pitch. And recent excavations have brought to light from beneath what we before knew of Egypt an earlier Egypt still—in statues and carvings which, instead of a hard and formal type, beam with life and expression, which show art struggling, ardent, natural, and free, the sure indication of an active and expanding life. So it must have been once with all now unprogressive civilizations.

But it is not merely these arrested civilizations that the current theory of development fails to account for. It is not merely that men have gone

so far on the path of progress and then stopped; it is that men have gone far on the path of progress and then gone back. It is not merely an isolated case that thus confronts the theory—*it is the universal rule.* Every civilization that the world has yet seen has had its period of vigorous growth, of arrest and stagnation; its decline and fall. Of all the civilizations that have arisen and flourished, there remain to-day but those that have been arrested, and our own, which is not yet as old as were the pyramids when Abraham looked upon them—while behind the pyramids were twenty centuries of recorded history.

That our own civilization has a broader base, is of a more advanced type, moves quicker and soars higher than any preceding civilization is undoubtedly true; but in these respects it is hardly more in advance of the Greco-Roman civilization than that was in advance of Asiatic civilization; and if it were, that would prove nothing as to its permanence and future advance, unless it be shown that it is superior in those things which caused the ultimate failure of its predecessors. The current theory does not assume this.

In truth, nothing could be further from explaining the facts of universal history than this theory

that civilization is the result of a course of natural selection which operates to improve and elevate the powers of man. That civilization has arisen at different times in different places and has progressed at different rates, is not inconsistent with this theory; for that might result from the unequal balancing of impelling and resisting forces; but that progress everywhere commencing, for even among the lowest tribes it is held that there has been some progress, has nowhere been continuous, but has everywhere been brought to a stand or retrogression, *is* absolutely inconsistent. For if progress operated to fix an improvement in man's nature and thus to produce further progress, though there might be occasional interruption, yet the general rule would be that progress would be continuous—that advance would lead to advance, and civilization develop into higher civilization.

Not merely the general rule, but *the universal rule*, is the reverse of this. The earth is the tomb of the dead empires, no less than of dead men. Instead of progress fitting men for greater progress, every civilization that was in its own time as vigorous and advancing as ours is now, has of itself come to a stop. Over and over again, art has declined, learning sunk,

power waned, population become sparse, until the people who had built great temples and mighty cities, turned rivers and pierced mountains, cultivated the earth like a garden and introduced the utmost refinement into the minute affairs of life, remained but in a remnant of squalid barbarians, who had lost even the memory of what their ancestors had done, and regarded the surviving fragments of their grandeur as the work of genii, or of the mighty race before the flood. So true is this, that when we think of the past, it seems like the inexorable law, from which we can no more hope to be exempt than the young man who "feels his life in every limb" can hope to be exempt from the dissolution which is the common fate of all. "Even this, O Rome, must one day be thy fate!" wept Scipio over the ruins of Carthage, and Macaulay's picture of the New Zealander musing upon the broken arch of London Bridge appeals to the imagination of even those who see cities rising in the wilderness and help to lay the foundations of new empire. And so, when we erect a public building we make a hollow in the largest corner stone and carefully seal within it some mementos of our day, looking forward to the time when our works shall be ruins and ourselves forgot.

Nor whether this alternate rise and fall of civilization, this retrogression that always follows progression, be, or be not, the rhythmic movement of an ascending line (and I think, though I will not open the question, that it would be much more difficult to prove the affirmative than is generally supposed) makes no difference; for the current theory is in either case disproved. Civilizations have died and made no sign, and hard-won progress has been lost to the race forever, but, even if it be admitted that each wave of progress has made possible a higher wave and each civilization passed the torch to a greater civilization, the theory that civilization advances by changes wrought in the nature of man fails to explain the facts; for in every case it is not the race that has been educated and hereditarily modified by the old civilization that begins the new, but a fresh race coming from a lower level. It is the barbarians of the one epoch who have been the civilized men of the next; to be in their turn succeeded by fresh barbarians. For it has been heretofore always the case that men under the influences of civilization, though at first improving, afterward degenerate. The civilized man of to-day is vastly the superior of the uncivilized; but so in the time of

its vigor was the civilized man of every dead civilization. But there are such things as the vices, the corruptions, the enervations of civilization, which past a certain point have always heretofore shown themselves. Every civilization that has been overwhelmed by barbarians has really perished from internal decay.

This universal fact, the moment that it is recognized, disposes of the theory that progress is by hereditary transmission. Looking over the history of the world, the line of greatest advance does not coincide for any length of time with any line of heredity. On any particular line of heredity, retrogression seems always to follow advance.

Shall we therefore say that there is a national or race life, as there is an individual life—that every social aggregate has, as it were, a certain amount of energy, the expenditure of which necessitates decay? This is an old and widespread idea, that is yet largely held, and that may be constantly seen cropping out incongruously in the writings of the expounders of the development philosophy. Indeed, I do not see why it may not be stated in terms of matter and of motion so as to bring it clearly within the generalizations of evolution. For considering its

individuals as atoms, the growth of society is "an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."* And thus an analogy may be drawn between the life of a society and the life of a solar system upon the nebular hypothesis. As the heat and light of the sun are produced by the aggregation of atoms evolving motion, which finally ceases when the atoms at length come to a state of equilibrium or rest, and a state of immobility succeeds, which can be broken in again only by the impact of external forces, which reverse the process of evolution, integrating motion and dissipating matter in the form of gas, again to evolve motion by its condensation; so, it may be said, does the aggregation of individuals in a community evolve a force which produces the light and warmth of civilization, but when this process ceases and the individual components are brought into a state of equilibrium, assuming their fixed places, petrifaction ensues, and the breaking up and diffusion caused by an incursion of barbarians is necessary to the

* Herbert Spencer's definition of Evolution, "First Principles," p. 396.

recommencement of the process and a new growth of civilization.

But analogies are the most dangerous modes of thought. They may connect resemblances and yet disguise or cover up the truth. And all such analogies are superficial. While its members are constantly reproduced in all the fresh vigor of childhood, a community cannot grow old, as does a man, by the decay of its powers. While its aggregate force must be the sum of the forces of its individual components, a community cannot lose vital power unless the vital powers of its components are lessened.

Yet in both the common analogy which likens the life power of a nation to that of an individual, and in the one I have supposed, lurks the recognition of an obvious truth—the truth that the obstacles which finally bring progress to a halt are raised by the course of progress; that what has destroyed all previous civilizations has been the conditions produced by the growth of civilization itself.

This is a truth which in the current philosophy is ignored; but it is a truth most pregnant. Any valid theory of human progress must account for it.

## II. Differences in Civilization—To What Due

IN attempting to discover the law of human progress, the first step must be to determine the essential nature of those differences which we describe as differences in civilization.

That the current philosophy, which attributes social progress to changes wrought in the nature of man, does not accord with historical facts, we have already seen. And we may also see, if we consider them, that the differences between communities in different stages of civilization cannot be ascribed to innate differences in the individuals who compose these communities. That there are natural differences is true, and that there is such a thing as hereditary transmission of peculiarities is undoubtedly true; but the great differences between men in different states of society cannot be explained in this way. The influence of heredity, which it is now the fashion to rate so highly, is as nothing compared with the influences which mold the man after he

comes into the world. What is more ingrained in habit than language, which becomes not merely an automatic trick of the muscles, but the medium of thought? What persists longer, or will quicker show nationality? Yet we are not born with a predisposition to any language. Our mother tongue is our mother tongue only because we learned it in infancy. Although his ancestors have thought and spoken in one language for countless generations, a child who hears from the first nothing else, will learn with equal facility any other tongue. And so of other national or local or class peculiarities. They seem to be matters of education and habit, not of transmission. Cases of white children captured by Indians in infancy and brought up in the wigwam show this. They become thorough Indians. And so, I believe, with children brought up by Gypsies.

That this is not so true of the children of Indians or other distinctly marked races brought up by whites is, I think, due to the fact that they are never treated precisely as white children. A gentleman who had taught a colored school once told me that he thought the colored children, up to the age of ten or twelve, were really brighter and learned more readily than white children, but that after that age

they seemed to get dull and careless. He thought this proof of innate race inferiority, and so did I at the time. But I afterward heard a highly intelligent Negro gentleman (Bishop Hillery) incidentally make a remark which to my mind seems a sufficient explanation. He said: "Our children, when they are young, are fully as bright as white children, and learn as readily. But as soon as they get old enough to appreciate their status—to realize that they are looked upon as belonging to an inferior race, and can never hope to be anything more than cooks, waiters, or something of that sort, they lose their ambition and cease to keep up." And to this he might have added, that being the children of poor, uncultivated and unambitious parents, home influences told against them. For, I believe it is a matter of common observation that in the primary part of education the children of ignorant parents are quite as receptive as the children of intelligent parents, but by and by the latter, as a general rule, pull ahead and make the most intelligent men and women. The reason is plain. As to the first simple things which they learn only at school, they are on a par, but as their studies become more complex, the child who at home is accustomed to good English, hears intelli-

gent conversation, has access to books, can get questions answered, etc., has an advantage which tells.

The same thing may be seen later in life. Take a man who has raised himself from the ranks of common labor, and just as he is brought into contact with men of culture and men of affairs, will he become more intelligent and polished. Take two brothers, the sons of poor parents, brought up in the same home and in the same way. One is put to a rude trade, and never gets beyond the necessity of making a living by hard daily labor; the other, commencing as an errand boy, gets a start in another direction, and becomes finally a successful lawyer, merchant, or politician. At forty or fifty the contrast between them will be striking, and the unreflecting will credit it to the greater natural ability which has enabled the one to push himself ahead. But just as striking a difference in manners and intelligence will be manifested between two sisters, one of whom, married to a man who has remained poor, has her life fretted with petty cares and devoid of opportunities, and the other of whom has married a man whose subsequent position brings her into cultured society and opens to her opportunities

which refine taste and expand intelligence. And so deteriorations may be seen. That "evil communications corrupt good manners" is but an expression of the general law that human character is profoundly modified by its conditions and surroundings.

I remember once seeing, in a Brazilian seaport, a Negro man dressed in what was an evident attempt at the height of fashion, but without shoes and stockings. One of the sailors with whom I was in company, and who had made some runs in the slave trade, had a theory that a Negro was not a man, but a sort of monkey, and pointed to this as evidence in proof, contending that it was not natural for a Negro to wear shoes, and that in his wild state he would wear no clothes at all. I afterward learned that it was not considered "the thing" there for slaves to wear shoes, just as in England it is not considered the thing for a faultlessly attired butler to wear jewelry, though for that matter I have since seen white men at liberty to dress as they pleased get themselves up as incongruously as the Brazilian slave. But a great many of the facts adduced as showing hereditary transmission have really no more bearing than this of our forecastle Darwinian. That, for instance, a large number of criminals and

recipients of public relief in New York have been shown to have descended from a pauper three or four generations back is extensively cited as showing hereditary transmission. But it shows nothing of the kind, inasmuch as an adequate explanation of the facts is nearer. Paupers will raise paupers, even if the children be not their own, just as familiar contact with criminals will make criminals of the children of virtuous parents. To learn to rely on charity is necessarily to lose the self-respect and independence necessary for self-reliance when the struggle is hard. So true is this that, as is well known, charity has the effect of increasing the demand for charity, and it is an open question whether public relief and private alms do not in this way do far more harm than good. And so of the disposition of children to show the same feelings, tastes, prejudices, or talents as their parents. They imbibe these dispositions just as they imbibe from their habitual associates. And the exceptions prove the rule, as dislikes or revulsions may be excited.

And there is, I think, a subtler influence which often accounts for what are looked upon as atavisms of character—the same influence that makes the boy who reads dime novels want to be a pirate. I once

knew a gentleman in whose veins ran the blood of Indian chiefs. He used to tell me traditions learned from his grandfather, which illustrated what is difficult for a white man to comprehend—the Indian habit of thought, the intense but patient blood thirst of the trail, and the fortitude of the stake. From the way in which he dwelt on these, I have no doubt that under certain circumstances, highly educated, civilized man that he was, he would have shown traits which would have been looked on as due to his Indian blood; but which in reality would have been sufficiently explained by the broodings of his imagination upon the deeds of his ancestors.*

In any large community we may see, as between different classes and groups, differences of the same kind as those which exist between communities which we speak of as differing in civilization—differences of knowledge, belief, customs, tastes, and speech, which in their extremes show among people of the same race, living in the same country, differences almost as great as those between civilized and savage

* Wordsworth, in his "Song at the Feast of Brougham Castle," has in highly poetical form alluded to this influence:

Armor rusting in his halls
On the blood of Clifford calls;
"Quell the Scot," exclaims the lance;
"Bear me to the heart of France,"
Is the longing of the shield.

communities. As all stages of social development, from the stone age up, are yet to be found in contemporaneously existing communities, so in the same country and in the same city are to be found, side by side, groups which show similar diversities. In such countries as England and Germany, children of the same race, born and reared in the same place, will grow up, speaking the language differently, holding different beliefs, following different customs, and showing different tastes; and even in such a country as the United States differences of the same kind, though not of the same degree, may be seen between different circles or groups.

But these differences are certainly not innate. No baby is born a Methodist or Catholic, to drop its h's or to sound them. All these differences which distinguish different groups or circles are derived from association in these circles.

The Janissaries were made up of youths torn from Christian parents at an early age, but they were none the less fanatical Moslems and none the less exhibited all the Turkish traits; the Jesuits and other orders show distinct character, but it is certainly not perpetuated by hereditary transmissions; and even such associations as schools or regiments, where the com-

ponents remain but a short time and are constantly changing, exhibit general characteristics, which are the result of mental impressions perpetuated by association.

Now, it is this body of traditions, beliefs, customs, laws, habits, and associations, which arise in every community and which surround every individual—this "super-organic environment," as Herbert Spencer calls it, that, as I take it, is the great element in determining national character. It is this, rather than hereditary transmission, which makes the Englishman differ from the Frenchman, the German from the Italian, the American from the Chinaman, and the civilized man from the savage man. It is in this way that national traits are preserved, extended, or altered.

Within certain limits, or, if you choose, without limits in itself, hereditary transmission may develop or alter qualities, but this is much more true of the physical than of the mental part of a man, and much more true of animals than it is even of the physical part of man. Deductions from the breeding of pigeons or cattle will not apply to man, and the reason is clear. The life of man, even in his rudest state, is infinitely more complex. He is constantly

acted on by an infinitely greater number of influences, amid which the relative influence of heredity becomes less and less. A race of men with no greater mental activity than the animals—men who only ate, drank, slept, and propagated—might, I doubt not, by careful treatment and selection in breeding, be made, in course of time, to exhibit as great diversities in bodily shape and character as similar means have produced in the domestic animals. But there are no such men; and in men as they are, mental influences, acting through the mind upon the body, would constantly interrupt the process. You cannot fatten a man whose mind is on the strain by cooping him up and feeding him as you would fatten a pig. In all probability men have been upon the earth longer than many species of animals. They have been separated from each other under differences of climate that produce the most marked differences in animals, and yet the physical differences between the different races of men are hardly greater than the difference between white horses and black horses—they are certainly nothing like as great as between dogs of the same sub-species, as, for instance, the different varieties of the terrier or spaniel. And even these physical differences between

races of men, it is held by those who account for them by natural selection and hereditary transmission, were brought out when man was much nearer the animal—that is to say, when he had less mind.

And if this be true of the physical constitution of man, in how much higher degree is it true of his mental constitution? All our physical parts we bring with us into the world; but the mind develops afterward.

There is a stage in the growth of every organism in which it cannot be told, except by the environment, whether the animal that is to be will be fish or reptile, monkey or man. And so with the newborn infant; whether the mind that is yet to awake to consciousness and power is to be English or German, American or Chinese—the mind of a civilized man or the mind of a savage—depends entirely on the social environment in which it is placed.

Take a number of infants born of the most highly civilized parents and transport them to an uninhabited country. Suppose them in some miraculous way to be sustained until they come of age to take care of themselves, and what would you have? More helpless savages than any we know of. They

would have fire to discover; the rudest tools and weapons to invent; language to construct. They would, in short, have to stumble their way to the simplest knowledge which the lowest races now possess, just as a child learns to walk. That they would in time do all these things I have not the slightest doubt, for all these possibilities are latent in the human mind just as the power of walking is latent in the human frame, but I do not believe they would do them any better or worse, any slower or quicker, than the children of barbarian parents placed in the same conditions. Given the very highest mental powers that exceptional individuals have ever displayed, and what could mankind be if one generation were separated from the next by an interval of time, as are the seventeen-year locusts? One such interval would reduce mankind, not to savagery, but to a condition compared with which savagery, as we know it, would seem civilization.

And, reversely, suppose a number of savage infants could, unknown to the mothers, for even this would be necessary to make the experiment a fair one, be substituted for as many children of civilization, can we suppose that growing up they would show any difference? I think no one who has mixed

much with different peoples and classes will think so. The great lesson that is thus learned is that "human nature is human nature all the world over." And this lesson, too, may be learned in the library. I speak not so much of the accounts of travelers, for the accounts given of savages by the civilized men who write books are very often just such accounts as savages would give of us did they make flying visits and then write books; but of those mementos of the life and thoughts of other times and other peoples, which, translated into our language of to-day, are like glimpses of our own lives and gleams of our own thought. The feeling they inspire is that of the essential similarity of men. "This," says Emanuel Deutsch—"this is the end of all investigation into history or art. *They were even as we are.*"

There is a people to be found in all parts of the world who well illustrate what peculiarities are due to hereditary transmission and what to transmission by association. The Jews have maintained the purity of their blood more scrupulously and for a far longer time than any of the European races, yet I am inclined to think that the only characteristic that can be attributed to this is that of physiognomy, and this is in reality far less marked than is con-

ventionally supposed, as any one who will take the trouble may see on observation. Although they have constantly married among themselves, the Jews have everywhere been modified by their surroundings—the English, Russian, Polish, German and Oriental Jews differing from each other in many respects as much as do the other people of those countries. Yet they have much in common, and have everywhere preserved their individuality. The reason is clear. It is the Hebrew religion—and certainly religion is not transmitted by generation, but by association—which has everywhere preserved the distinctiveness of the Hebrew race. This religion, which children derive, not as they derive their physical characteristics, but by precept and association, is not merely exclusive in its teachings, but has, by engendering suspicion and dislike, produced a powerful outside pressure which, even more than its precepts, has everywhere constituted of the Jews a community within a community. Thus has been built up and maintained a certain peculiar environment which gives a distinctive character. Jewish intermarriage has been the effect, not the cause of this. What persecution which stopped short of taking Jewish children from their parents and bringing

them up outside of this peculiar environment could not accomplish, will be accomplished by the lessening intensity of religious belief, as is already evident in the United States, where the distinction between Jew and Gentile is fast disappearing.

And it seems to me that the influence of this social net or environment will explain what is so often taken as proof of race differences—the difficulty which less civilized races show in receiving higher civilization, and the manner in which some of them melt away before it. Just as one social environment persists, so does it render it difficult or impossible for those subject to it to accept another.

The Chinese character is fixed if that of any people is. Yet the Chinese in California acquire American modes of working, trading, the use of machinery, etc., with such facility as to prove that they have no lack of flexibility, or natural capacity. That they do not change in other respects is due to the Chinese environment that still persists and still surrounds them. Coming from China, they look forward to return to China, and live while here in a little China of their own, just as the Englishmen in India maintain a little England. It is not merely that we naturally seek association with those who

share our peculiarities, and that thus language, religion and custom tend to persist where individuals are not absolutely isolated; but that these differences provoke an external pressure, which compels such association.

These obvious principles fully account for all the phenomena which are seen in the meeting of one stage or body of culture with another, without resort to the theory of ingrained differences. For instance, as comparative philology has shown, the Hindoo is of the same race as his English conqueror, and individual instances have abundantly shown that if he could be placed completely and exclusively in the English environment (which, as before stated, could be thoroughly done only by placing infants in English families in such a way that neither they, as they grow up, nor those around them, would be conscious of any distinction), one generation would be all required to thoroughly implant European civilization. But the progress of English ideas and habits in India must be necessarily very slow, because they meet there the web of ideas and habits constantly perpetuated through an immense population, and interlaced with every act of life.

Mr. Bagehot ("Physics and Politics") endeavors

to explain the reason why barbarians waste away before our civilization, while they did not before that of the ancients, by assuming that the progress of civilization has given us tougher physical constitutions. After alluding to the fact that there is no lament in any classical writer for the barbarians, but that everywhere the barbarian endured the contact with the Roman and the Roman allied himself to the barbarian, he says (pp. 47-8):

"Savages in the first year of the Christian era were pretty much what they were in the eighteen hundredth; and if they stood the contact of ancient civilized men and cannot stand ours, it follows that our race is presumably tougher than the ancient; for we have to bear, and do bear, the seeds of greater diseases than the ancients carried with them. We may use, perhaps, the unvarying savage as a meter to gauge the vigor of the constitution to whose contact he is exposed."

Mr. Bagehot does not attempt to explain how it is that eighteen hundred years ago civilization did not give the like relative advantage over barbarism that it does now. But there is no use of talking about that, or of the lack of proof that the human constitution has been a whit improved. To any one who has seen how the contact of our civilization affects the inferior races, a much readier though less flattering explanation will occur.

It is not because our constitutions are naturally tougher than those of the savage, that diseases which are comparatively innocuous to us are certain death to him. It is that we know and have the means of treating those diseases, while he is destitute both of knowledge and means. The same diseases with which the scum of civilization that floats in its advance inoculate the savage would prove as destructive to civilized men, if they knew no better than to let them run, as he in his ignorance has to let them run; and as a matter of fact they were as destructive, until we found out how to treat them. And not merely this, but the effect of the impingement of civilization upon barbarism is to weaken the power of the savage without bringing him into the conditions that give power to the civilized man. While his habits and customs still tend to persist, and do persist as far as they can, the conditions to which they were adapted are forcibly changed. He is a hunter in a land stripped of game; a warrior deprived of his arms and called on to plead in legal technicalities. He is not merely placed between cultures, but, as Mr. Bagehot says of the European half-breeds in India, he is placed between moralities, and learns the vices of civilization without its virtues. He loses his ac-

customed means of subsistence, he loses self-respect, he loses morality; he deteriorates and dies away. The miserable creatures who may be seen hanging around frontier towns or railroad stations, ready to beg, or steal, or solicit a viler commerce, are not fair representatives of the Indian before the white man had encroached upon his hunting grounds. They have lost the strength and virtues of their former state, without gaining those of a higher. In fact, civilization, as it pushes the red man, shows no virtues. To the Anglo-Saxon of the frontier, as a rule, the aborigine has no rights which the white man is bound to respect. He is impoverished, misunderstood, cheated, and abused. He dies out, as, under similar conditions, we should die out. He disappears before civilization as the Romanized Britons disappeared before Saxon barbarism.

The true reason why there is no lament in any classic writer for the barbarian, but that the Roman civilization assimilated instead of destroying, is, I take it, to be found not only in the fact that the ancient civilization was much nearer akin to the barbarians which it met, but in the more important fact that it was not extended as ours has been. It was carried forward, not by an advancing line of

colonists, but by conquest which merely reduced the new province to general subjection, leaving the social, and generally the political organization of the people to a great degree unimpaired, so that, without shattering or deterioration, the process of assimilation went on. In a somewhat similar way the civilization of Japan seems to be now assimilating itself to European civilization.

In America the Anglo-Saxon has exterminated, instead of civilizing, the Indian, simply because he has not brought the Indian into his environment, nor yet has the contact been in such a way as to induce or permit the Indian web of habitual thought and custom to be changed rapidly enough to meet the new conditions into which he has been brought by the proximity of new and powerful neighbors. That there is no innate impediment to the reception of our civilization by these uncivilized races has been shown over and over again in individual cases. And it has likewise been shown, so far as the experiments have been permitted to go, by the Jesuits in Paraguay, the Franciscans in California, and the Protestant missionaries on some of the Pacific islands.

The assumption of physical improvement in the race within any time of which we have knowledge is

utterly without warrant, and within the time of which Mr. Bagehot speaks, it is absolutely disproved. We know from classic statues, from the burdens carried and the marches made by ancient soldiers, from the records of runners and the feats of gymnasts, that neither in proportions nor strength has the race improved within two thousand years. But the assumption of mental improvement, which is even more confidently and generally made, is still more preposterous. As poets, artists, architects, philosophers, rhetoricians, statesmen, or soldiers, can modern civilization show individuals of greater mental power than can the ancient? There is no use in recalling names—every schoolboy knows them. For our models and personifications of mental power we go back to the ancients, and if we can for a moment imagine the possibility of what is held by that oldest and most widespread of all beliefs—that belief which Lessing declared on this account the most probably true, though he accepted it on metaphysical grounds—and suppose Homer or Virgil, Demosthenes or Cicero, Alexander, Hannibal or Cæsar, Plato or Lucretius, Euclid or Aristotle, as reentering this life again in the Nineteenth Century, can we suppose that they would show any inferiority

to the men of to-day? Or if we take any period since the classic age, even the darkest, or any previous period of which we know anything, shall we not find men who in the conditions and degree of knowledge of their times showed mental power of as high an order as men show now? And among the less advanced races do we not to-day, whenever our attention is called to them, find men who in their conditions exhibit mental qualities as great as civilization can show? Did the invention of the railroad, coming when it did, prove any greater inventive power than did the invention of the wheelbarrow when wheelbarrows were not? We of modern civilization are raised far above those who have preceded us and those of the less advanced races who are our contemporaries. But it is because we stand on a pyramid, not that we are taller. What the centuries have done for us is not to increase our stature, but to build up a structure on which we may plant our feet.

Let me repeat: I do not mean to say that all men possess the same capacities, or are mentally alike, any more than I mean to say that they are physically alike. Among all the countless millions who have come and gone on this earth, there were probably never two who either physically or mentally were

exact counterparts. Nor yet do I mean to say that there are not as clearly marked race differences in mind as there are clearly marked race differences in body. I do not deny the influence of heredity in transmitting peculiarities of mind in the same way, and possibly to the same degree, as bodily peculiarities are transmitted. But nevertheless, there is, it seems to me, a common standard and natural symmetry of mind, as there is of body, toward which all deviations tend to return. The conditions under which we fall may produce such distortions as the Flatheads produce by compressing the heads of their infants or the Chinese by binding their daughters' feet. But as Flathead babies continue to be born with naturally shaped heads and Chinese babies with naturally shaped feet, so does nature seem to revert to the normal mental type. A child no more inherits his father's knowledge than he inherits his father's glass eye or artificial leg; the child of the most ignorant parents may become a pioneer of science or a leader of thought.

But this is the great fact with which we are concerned: That the differences between the people of communities in different places and at different times, which we call differences of civilization, are

not differences which inhere in the individuals, but differences which inhere in the society; that they are not, as Herbert Spencer holds, differences resulting from differences in the units; but that they are differences resulting from the conditions under which these units are brought in the society. In short, I take the explanation of the differences which distinguish communities to be this: That each society, small or great, necessarily weaves for itself a web of knowledge, beliefs, customs, language, tastes, institutions, and laws. Into this web, woven by each society, or rather, into these webs, for each community above the simplest is made up of minor societies, which overlap and interlace each other, the individual is received at birth and continues until his death. This is the matrix in which mind unfolds and from which it takes its stamp. This is the way in which customs, and religions, and prejudices, and tastes, and languages, grow up and are perpetuated. This is the way that skill is transmitted and knowledge is stored up, and the discoveries of one time made the common stock and stepping stone of the next. Though it is this that often offers the most serious obstacles to progress, it is this that makes progress possible. It is this that enables any schoolboy in

our time to learn in a few hours more of the universe than Ptolemy knew; that places the most humdrum scientist far above the level reached by the giant mind of Aristotle. This is to the race what memory is to the individual. Our wonderful arts, our far-reaching science, our marvelous inventions—they have come through this.

Human progress goes on as the advances made by one generation are in this way secured as the common property of the next, and made the starting point for new advances.

## III. Association in Equality

WHAT, then, is the law of human progress—the law under which civilization advances?

It must explain clearly and definitely, and not by vague generalities or superficial analogies, why, though mankind started presumably with the same capacities and at the same time, there now exist such wide differences in social development. It must account for the arrested civilizations and for the decayed and destroyed civilizations; for the general facts as to the rise of civilization, and for the petrifying or enervating force which the progress of civilization has heretofore always evolved. It must account for retrogression as well as for progression; for the differences in general character between Asiatic and European civilizations; for the difference between classical and modern civilizations; for the different rates at which progress goes on; and for those bursts, and starts, and halts of progress

which are so marked as minor phenomena. And, thus, it must show us what are the essential conditions of progress, and what social adjustments advance and what retard it.

It is not difficult to discover such a law. We have but to look and we may see it. I do not pretend to give it scientific precision, but merely to point it out.

The incentives to progress are the desires inherent in human nature—the desire to gratify the wants of the animal nature, the wants of the intellectual nature, and the wants of the sympathetic nature; the desire to be, to know, and to do—desires that short of infinity can never be satisfied, as they grow by what they feed on.

Mind is the instrument by which man advances, and by which each advance is secured and made the vantage ground for new advances. Though he may not by taking thought add a cubit to his stature, man may by taking thought extend his knowledge of the universe and his power over it, in what, so far as we can see, is an infinite degree. The narrow span of human life allows the individual to go but a short distance, but though each generation may do but little, yet generations, succeeding to the gain of their predecessors, may gradually elevate the status of

mankind, as coral polyps, building one generation upon the work of the other, gradually elevate themselves from the bottom of the sea.

Mental power is, therefore, the motor of progress, and men tend to advance in proportion to the mental power expended in progression—the mental power which is devoted to the extension of knowledge, the improvement of methods, and the betterment of social conditions.

Now mental power is a fixed quantity—that is to say, there is a limit to the work a man can do with his mind, as there is to the work he can do with his body; therefore, the mental power which can be devoted to progress is only what is left after what is required for non-progressive purposes.

These non-progressive purposes in which mental power is consumed may be classified as maintenance and conflict. By maintenance I mean, not only the support of existence, but the keeping up of the social condition and the holding of advances already gained. By conflict I mean not merely warfare and preparation for warfare, but all expenditure of mental power in seeking the gratification of desire at the expense of others, and in resistance to such aggression.

To compare society to a boat. Her progress through the water will not depend upon the exertion of her crew, but upon the exertion devoted to propelling her. This will be lessened by any expenditure of force required for bailing, or any expenditure of force in fighting among themselves, or in pulling in different directions.

Now, as in a separated state the whole powers of man are required to maintain existence, and mental power is set free for higher uses only by the association of men in communities, which permits the division of labor and all the economies which come with the co-operation of increased numbers, association is the first essential of progress. Improvement becomes possible as men come together in peaceful association, and the wider and closer the association, the greater the possibilities of improvement. And as the wasteful expenditure of mental power in conflict becomes greater or less as the moral law which accords to each an equality of rights is ignored or is recognized, equality (or justice) is the second essential of progress.

Thus *association in equality* is the law of progress. Association frees mental power for expenditure in improvement, and equality, or jus-

tice, or freedom—for the terms here signify the same thing, the recognition of the moral law—prevents the dissipation of this power in fruitless struggles.

Here is the law of progress, which will explain all diversities, all advances, all halts, and retrogressions. Men tend to progress just as they come closer together, and by co-operation with each other increase the mental power that may be devoted to improvement, but just as conflict is provoked, or association develops inequality of condition and power, this tendency to progression is lessened, checked, and finally reversed.

Given the same innate capacity, and it is evident that social development will go on faster or slower, will stop or turn back, according to the resistances it meets. In a general way these obstacles to improvement may, in relation to the society itself, be classed as external and internal—the first operating with greater force in the earlier stages of civilization, the latter becoming more important in the later stages.

Man is social in his nature. He does not require to be caught and tamed in order to induce him to live with his fellows. The utter helplessness with which

he enters the world, and the long period required for the maturity of his powers, necessitate the family relation; which, as we may observe, is wider, and in its extensions stronger, among the ruder than among the more cultivated peoples. The first societies are families, expanding into tribes, still holding a mutual blood relationship, and even when they have become great nations claiming a common descent.

Given beings of this kind, placed on a globe of such diversified surface and climate as this, and it is evident that, even with equal capacity, and an equal start, social development must be very different. The first limit or resistance to association will come from the conditions of physical nature, and as these greatly vary with locality, corresponding differences in social progress must show themselves. The net rapidity of increase, and the closeness with which men, as they increase, can keep together, will, in the rude state of knowledge in which reliance for subsistence must be principally upon the spontaneous offerings of nature, very largely depend upon climate, soil, and physical conformation. Where much animal food and warm clothing are required; where the earth seems poor and niggard; where the exu-

berant life of tropical forests mocks barbarous man's puny efforts to control; where mountains, deserts, or arms of the sea separate and isolate men, association, and the power of improvement which it evolves, can at first go but a little way. But on the rich plains of warm climates, where human existence can be maintained with a smaller expenditure of force, and from a much smaller area, men can keep closer together, and the mental power which can at first be devoted to improvement is much greater. Hence civilization naturally first arises in the great valleys and table lands where we find its earliest monuments.

But these diversities in natural conditions, not merely thus directly produce diversities in social development, but, by producing diversities in social development, bring out in man himself an obstacle, or rather an active counterforce, to improvement. As families and tribes are separated from each other, the social feeling ceases to operate between them, and differences arise in language, custom, tradition, religion—in short, in the whole social web which each community, however small or large, constantly spins. With these differences, prejudices grow, animosities spring up, contact easily produces quarrels, aggres-

sion begets aggression, and wrong kindles revenge.* And so between these separate social aggregates arises the feeling of Ishmael and the spirit of Cain, warfare becomes the chronic and seemingly natural relation of societies to each other, and the powers of men are expended in attack or defense, in mutual slaughter and mutual destruction of wealth, or in warlike preparations. How long this hostility persists, the protective tariffs and the standing armies of the civilized world to-day bear witness. Can we wonder at the perpetual hostilities of tribes and clans? Can we wonder that when each community was isolated from the others—when each, uninfluenced by the others, was spinning its separate web of social environment, which no individual can escape, that war should have been the rule and peace the exception? "They were even as we are."

* How easy it is for ignorance to pass into contempt and dislike; how natural it is for us to consider any difference in manners, customs, religion, etc., as proof of the inferiority of those who differ from us, any one who has emancipated himself in any degree from prejudice, and who mixes with different classes, may see in civilized society. In religion, for instance, the spirit of the hymn—

"I'd rather be a Baptist, and wear a shining face,
Than for to be a Methodist and always fall from grace,"

is observable in all denominations. As the English Bishop said, "Orthodoxy is my doxy, and heterodoxy is any other doxy," while the universal tendency is to classify all outside of the orthodoxies and heterodoxies of the prevailing religion as heathens or atheists. And the like tendency is observable as to all other differences.

Now, warfare is the negation of association. The separation of men into diverse tribes, by increasing warfare, thus checks improvement; while in the localities where a large increase in numbers is possible without much separation, civilization gains the advantage of exemption from tribal war, even when the community as a whole is carrying on warfare beyond its borders. Thus, where the resistance of nature to the close association of men is slightest, the counterforce of warfare is likely at first to be least felt; and in the rich plains where civilization first begins, it may rise to a great height while scattered tribes are yet barbarous. And thus, when small, separated communities exist in a state of chronic warfare which forbids advance, the first step to their civilization is the advent of some conquering tribe or nation that unites these smaller communities into a larger one, in which internal peace is preserved. Where this power of peaceable association is broken up, either by external assaults or internal dissensions, the advance ceases and retrogression begins.

But it is not conquest alone that has operated to promote association, and, by liberating mental power from the necessities of warfare, to promote

civilization. If the diversities of climate, soil, and configuration of the earth's surface operate at first to separate mankind, they also operate to encourage exchange. And commerce, which is in itself a form of association or co-operation, operates to promote civilization, not only directly, but by building up interests which are opposed to warfare, and dispelling the ignorance which is the fertile mother of prejudices and animosities.

And so of religion. Though the forms it has assumed and the animosities it has aroused have often sundered men and produced warfare, yet it has at other times been the means of promoting association. A common worship has often, as among the Greeks, mitigated war and furnished the basis of union, while it is from the triumph of Christianity over the barbarians of Europe that modern civilization springs. Had not the Christian Church existed when the Roman Empire went to pieces, Europe, destitute of any bond of association, might have fallen to a condition not much above that of the North American Indians or only received civilization with an Asiatic impress from the conquering scimiters of the invading hordes which had been welded into a mighty power by a religion which, springing

up in the deserts of Arabia, had united tribes separated from time immemorial, and, thence issuing, brought into the association of a common faith a great part of the human race.

Looking over what we know of the history of the world, we thus see civilization everywhere springing up where men are brought into association, and everywhere disappearing as this association is broken up. Thus the Roman civilization, spread over Europe by the conquests which insured internal peace, was overwhelmed by the incursions of the northern nations that broke society again into disconnected fragments; and the progress that now goes on in our modern civilization began as the feudal system again began to associate men in larger communities, and the spiritual supremacy of Rome to bring these communities into a common relation, as her legions had done before. As the feudal bonds grew into national autonomies, and Christianity worked the amelioration of manners, brought forth the knowledge that during the dark days she had hidden, bound the threads of peaceful union in her all-pervading organization, and taught association in her religious orders, a greater progress became possible, which, as men have been brought into

closer and closer association and co-operation, has gone on with greater and greater force.

But we shall never understand the course of civilization, and the varied phenomena which its history presents, without a consideration of what I may term the internal resistances, or counterforces, which arise in the heart of advancing society, and which can alone explain how a civilization once fairly started should either come of itself to a halt or be destroyed by barbarians.

The mental power, which is the motor of social progress, is set free by association, which is, what, perhaps, it may be more properly called, an integration. Society in this process becomes more complex; its individuals more dependent upon each other. Occupations and functions are specialized. Instead of wandering, population becomes fixed. Instead of each man attempting to supply all of his wants, the various trades and industries are separated—one man acquires skill in one thing, and another in another thing. So, too, of knowledge, the body of which constantly tends to become vaster than one man can grasp, and is separated into different parts, which different individuals acquire and pursue. So, too, the performance of religious ceremonies tends

to pass into the hands of a body of men specially devoted to that purpose, and the preservation of order, the administration of justice, the assignment of public duties and the distribution of awards, the conduct of war, etc., to be made the special functions of an organized government. In short, to use the language in which Herbert Spencer has defined evolution, the development of society is, in relation to its component individuals, the passing from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity. The lower the stage of social development, the more society resembles one of those lowest of animal organisms which are without organs or limbs, and from which a part may be cut and yet live. The higher the stage of social development, the more society resembles those higher organisms in which functions and powers are specialized, and each member is vitally dependent on the others.

Now, this process of integration, of the specialization of functions and powers, as it goes on in society, is, by virtue of what is probably one of the deepest laws of human nature, accompanied by a constant liability to inequality. I do not mean that inequality is the necessary result of social growth, but that it is

the constant tendency of social growth if unaccompanied by changes in social adjustments, which, in the new conditions that growth produces, will secure equality. I mean, so to speak, that the garment of laws, customs, and political institutions, which each society weaves for itself, is constantly tending to become too tight as the society develops. I mean, so to speak, that man, as he advances, threads a labyrinth, in which, if he keeps straight ahead, he will infallibly lose his way, and through which reason and justice can alone keep him continuously in an ascending path.

For, while the integration which accompanies growth tends in itself to set free mental power to work improvement, there is, both with increase of numbers and with increase in complexity of the social organization, a counter tendency set up to the production of a state of inequality, which wastes mental power, and, as it increases, brings improvement to a halt.

To trace to its highest expression the law which thus operates to evolve with progress the force which stops progress, would be, it seems to me, to go far to the solution of a problem deeper than that of the genesis of the material universe—the problem of the

genesis of evil. Let me content myself with pointing out the manner in which, as society develops, there arise tendencies which check development.

There are two qualities of human nature which it will be well, however, to first call to mind. The one is the power of habit—the tendency to continue to do things in the same way; the other is the possibility of mental and moral deterioration. The effect of the first in social development is to continue habits, customs, laws and methods, long after they have lost their original usefulness, and the effect of the other is to permit the growth of institutions and modes of thought from which the normal perceptions of men instinctively revolt.

Now the growth and development of society not merely tend to make each more and more dependent upon all, and to lessen the influence of individuals, even over their own conditions, as compared with the influence of society; but the effect of association or integration is to give rise to a collective power which is distinguishable from the sum of individual powers. Analogies, or, perhaps, rather illustrations of the same law, may be found in all directions. As animal organisms increase in complexity, there arise, above the life and power of the parts, a life and

power of the integrated whole; above the capability of involuntary movements, the capability of voluntary movements. The actions and impulses of bodies of men are, as has often been observed, different from those which, under the same circumstances, would be called forth in individuals. The fighting qualities of a regiment may be very different from those of the individual soldiers. But there is no need of illustrations. In the nature and rise of rent, we may trace the very thing to which I allude. Where population is sparse, land has no value; just as men congregate together, the value of land appears and rises—a clearly distinguishable thing from the values produced by individual effort; a value which springs from association, which increases as association grows greater, and disappears as association is broken up. And the same thing is true of power in other forms than those generally expressed in terms of wealth.

Now, as society grows, the disposition to continue previous social adjustments tends to lodge this collective power, as it arises, in the hands of a portion of the community; and this unequal distribution of the wealth and power gained as society advances tends to produce greater inequality, since

aggression grows by what it feeds on, and the idea of justice is blurred by the habitual toleration of injustice.

In this way the patriarchal organization of society can easily grow into hereditary monarchy, in which the king is as a god on earth, and the masses of the people mere slaves of his caprice. It is natural that the father should be the directing head of the family, and that at his death the eldest son, as the oldest and most experienced member of the little community, should succeed to the headship. But to continue this arrangement as the family expands, is to lodge power in a particular line, and the power thus lodged necessarily continues to increase, as the common stock becomes larger and larger, and the power of the community grows. The head of the family passes into the hereditary king, who comes to look upon himself and to be looked upon by others as a being of superior rights. With the growth of the collective power as compared with the power of the individual, his power to reward and to punish increases, and so increase the inducements to flatter and to fear him; until finally, if the process be not disturbed, a nation grovels at the foot of a throne, and a hundred thousand men toil for fifty years

to prepare a tomb for one of their own mortal kind.

So the war-chief of a little band of savages is but one of their number, whom they follow as their bravest and most wary. But when large bodies come to act together, personal selection becomes more difficult, a blinder obedience becomes necessary and can be enforced, and from the very necessities of warfare when conducted on a large scale absolute power arises.

And so of the specialization of function. There is a manifest gain in productive power when social growth has gone so far that instead of every producer being summoned from his work for fighting purposes, a regular military force can be specialized; but this inevitably tends to the concentration of power in the hands of the military class or their chiefs. The preservation of internal order, the administration of justice, the construction and care of public works, and, notably, the observances of religion, all tend in similar manner to pass into the hands of special classes, whose disposition it is to magnify their function and extend their power.

But the great cause of inequality is in the natural monopoly which is given by the possession of land.

The first perceptions of men seem always to be that land is common property; but the rude devices by which this is at first recognized—such as annual partitions or cultivation in common—are consistent with only a low stage of development. The idea of property, which naturally arises with reference to things of human production, is easily transferred to land, and an institution which when population is sparse merely secures to the improver and user the due reward of his labor, finally, as population becomes dense and rent arises, operates to strip the producer of his earnings. Not merely this, but the appropriation of rent for public purposes, which is the only way in which, with anything like a high development, land can be readily retained as common property, becomes, when political and religious power passes into the hands of a class, the ownership of the land by that class, and the rest of the community become merely tenants. And wars and conquests, which tend to the concentration of political power and to the institution of slavery, naturally result, where social growth has given land a value, in the appropriation of the soil. A dominant class, who concentrate power in their hands, will likewise soon concentrate ownership of the land. To them

will fall large partitions of conquered land, which the former inhabitants will till as tenants or serfs, and the public domain, or common lands, which in the natural course of social growth are left for awhile in every country, and in which state the primitive system of village culture leaves pasture and woodland, are readily acquired, as we see by modern instances. And inequality once established, the ownership of land tends to concentrate as development goes on.

I am merely attempting to set forth the general fact that as a social development goes on, inequality tends to establish itself, and not to point out the particular sequence, which must necessarily vary with different conditions. But this main fact makes intelligible all the phenomena of petrifaction and retrogression. The unequal distribution of the power and wealth gained by the integration of men in society tends to check, and finally to counterbalance, the force by which improvements are made and society advances. On the one side, the masses of the community are compelled to expend their mental powers in merely maintaining existence. On the other side, mental power is expended in keeping up and intensifying the system of inequality, in ostenta-

tion, luxury, and warfare. A community divided into a class that rules and a class that is ruled—into the very rich and the very poor, may "build like giants and finish like jewelers"; but it will be monuments of ruthless pride and barren vanity, or of a religion turned from its office of elevating man into an instrument for keeping him down. Invention may for awhile to some degree go on; but it will be the invention of refinements in luxury, not the inventions that relieve toil and increase power. In the arcana of temples or in the chambers of court physicians knowledge may still be sought; but it will be hidden as a secret thing, or if it dares come out to elevate common thought or brighten common life, it will be trodden down as a dangerous innovator. For as it tends to lessen the mental power devoted to improvement, so does inequality tend to render men adverse to improvement. How strong is the disposition to adhere to old methods among the classes who are kept in ignorance by being compelled to toil for a mere existence, is too well known to require illustration, and on the other hand the conservatism of the classes to whom the existing social adjustment gives special advantages is equally apparent. This tendency to resist innovation, even

though it be improvement, is observable in every special organization—in religion, in law, in medicine, in science, in trade guilds; and it becomes intense just as the organization is close. A close corporation has always an instinctive dislike of innovation and innovators, which is but the expression of an instinctive fear that change may tend to throw down the barriers which hedge it in from the common herd, and so rob it of importance and power; and it is always disposed to guard carefully its special knowledge or skill.

It is in this way that petrifaction succeeds progress. The advance of inequality necessarily brings improvement to a halt, and as it still persists or provokes unavailing reactions, draws even upon the mental power necessary for maintenance, and retrogression begins.

These principles make intelligible the history of civilization.

In the localities where climate, soil, and physical conformation tended least to separate men as they increased, and where, accordingly, the first civilizations grew up, the internal resistances to progress would naturally develop in a more regular and thorough manner than where smaller communities,

which in their separation had developed diversities, were afterward brought together into a closer association. It is this, it seems to me, which accounts for the general characteristics of the earlier civilizations as compared with the later civilizations of Europe. Such homogeneous communities, developing from the first without the jar of conflict between different customs, laws, religions, etc., would show a much greater uniformity. The concentrating and conservative forces would all, so to speak, pull together. Rival chieftains would not counterbalance each other, nor diversities of belief hold the growth of priestly influence in check. Political and religious power, wealth and knowledge, would thus tend to concentrate in the same centers. The same causes which tended to produce the hereditary king and hereditary priest would tend to produce the hereditary artisan and laborer, and to separate society into castes. The power which association sets free for progress would thus be wasted, and barriers to further progress be gradually raised. The surplus energies of the masses would be devoted to the construction of temples, palaces, and pyramids; to ministering to the pride and pampering the luxury of their rulers; and should any disposition to im-

provement arise among the classes of leisure it would at once be checked by the dread of innovation. Society developing in this way must at length stop in a conservatism which permits no further progress.

How long such a state of complete petrification, when once reached, will continue, seems to depend upon external causes, for the iron bonds of the social environment which grows up repress disintegrating forces as well as improvement. Such a community can be most easily conquered, for the masses of the people are trained to a passive acquiescence in a life of hopeless labor. If the conquerors merely take the place of the ruling class, as the Hyksos did in Egypt and the Tartars in China, everything will go on as before. If they ravage and destroy, the glory of palace and temple remains but in ruins, population becomes sparse, and knowledge and art are lost.

European civilization differs in character from civilizations of the Egyptian type because it springs not from the association of a homogeneous people developing from the beginning, or at least for a long time, under the same conditions, but from the association of peoples who in separation had acquired distinctive social characteristics, and whose smaller organizations longer prevented the concentration of

power and wealth in one center. The physical conformation of the Grecian peninsula is such as to separate the people at first into a number of small communities. As those petty republics and nominal kingdoms ceased to waste their energies in warfare, and the peaceable co-operation of commerce extended, the light of civilization blazed up. But the principle of association was never strong enough to save Greece from inter-tribal war, and when this was put an end to by conquest, the tendency to inequality, which had been combated with various devices by Grecian sages and statesmen, worked its result, and Grecian valor, art, and literature became things of the past. And so in the rise and extension, the decline and fall, of Roman civilization, may be seen the working of these two principles of association and equality, from the combination of which springs progress.

Springing from the association of the independent husbandmen and free citizens of Italy, and gaining fresh strength from conquests which brought hostile nations into common relations, the Roman power hushed the world in peace. But the tendency to inequality, checking real progress from the first, increased as the Roman civilization extended. The

Roman civilization did not petrify as did the homogeneous civilizations where the strong bonds of custom and superstition that held the people in subjection probably also protected them, or at any rate kept the peace between rulers and ruled; it rotted, declined and fell. Long before Goth or Vandal had broken through the cordon of the legions, even while her frontiers were advancing, Rome was dead at the heart. Great estates had ruined Italy. Inequality had dried up the strength and destroyed the vigor of the Roman world. Government became despotism, which even assassination could not temper; patriotism became servility; vices the most foul flouted themselves in public; literature sank to puerilities; learning was forgotten; fertile districts became waste without the ravages of war—everywhere inequality produced decay, political, mental, moral, and material. The barbarism which overwhelmed Rome came not from without, but from within. It was the necessary product of the system which had substituted slaves and coloni for the independent husbandmen of Italy, and carved the provinces into estates of senatorial families.

Modern civilization owes its superiority to the growth of equality with the growth of association.

Two great causes contributed to this—the splitting up of concentrated power into innumerable little centers by the influx of the Northern nations, and the influence of Christianity. Without the first there would have been the petrifaction and slow decay of the Eastern Empire, where church and state were closely married and loss of external power brought no relief of internal tyranny. And but for the other there would have been barbarism, without principle of association or amelioration. The petty chiefs and allodial lords who everywhere grasped local sovereignty held each other in check. Italian cities recovered their ancient liberty, free towns were founded, village communities took root, and serfs acquired rights in the soil they tilled. The leaven of Teutonic ideas of equality worked through the disorganized and disjointed fabric of society. And although society was split up into an innumerable number of separated fragments, yet the idea of closer association was always present—it existed in the recollections of a universal empire; it existed in the claims of a universal church.

Though Christianity became distorted and alloyed in percolating through a rotting civilization; though pagan gods were taken into her pantheon, and pagan

forms into her ritual, and pagan ideas into her creed; yet her essential idea of the equality of men was never wholly destroyed. And two things happened of the utmost moment to incipient civilization—the establishment of the papacy and the celibacy of the clergy. The first prevented the spiritual power from concentrating in the same lines as the temporal power; and the latter prevented the establishment of a priestly caste, during a time when all power tended to hereditary form.

In her efforts for the abolition of slavery; in her Truce of God; in her monastic orders; in her councils which united nations, and her edicts which ran without regard to political boundaries; in the low-born hands in which she placed a sign before which the proudest knelt; in her bishops who by consecration became the peers of the greatest nobles; in her "Servant of Servants," for so his official title ran, who, by virtue of the ring of a simple fisherman, claimed the right to arbitrate between nations, and whose stirrup was held by kings; the Church, in spite of everything, was yet a promoter of association, a witness for the natural equality of men; and by the Church herself was nurtured a spirit that, when her early work of association and emancipation

was well-nigh done—when the ties she had knit had become strong, and the learning she had preserved had been given to the world—broke the chains with which she would have fettered the human mind, and in a great part of Europe rent her organization.

The rise and growth of European civilization is too vast and complex a subject to be thrown into proper perspective and relation in a few paragraphs; but in all its details, as in its main features, it illustrates the truth that progress goes on just as society tends toward closer association and greater equality. Civilization is co-operation. Union and liberty are its factors. The great extension of association—not alone in the growth of larger and denser communities, but in the increase of commerce and the manifold exchanges which knit each community together and link them with other though widely separated communities; the growth of international and municipal law; the advances in security of property and of person, in individual liberty, and towards democratic government—advances, in short, towards the recognition of the equal rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness—it is these that make our modern civilization so much greater, so much higher, than any that has gone before. It is

these that have set free the mental power which has rolled back the veil of ignorance which hid all but a small portion of the globe from men's knowledge; which has measured the orbits of the circling spheres and bids us see moving, pulsing life in a drop of water; which has opened to us the antechamber of nature's mysteries and read the secrets of a long-buried past; which has harnessed in our service physical forces beside which man's efforts are puny; and increased productive power by a thousand great inventions.

In that spirit of fatalism to which I have alluded as pervading current literature, it is the fashion to speak even of war and slavery as means of human progress. But war, which is the opposite of association, can aid progress only when it prevents further war or breaks down anti-social barriers which are themselves passive war.

As for slavery, I cannot see how it could ever have aided in establishing freedom, and freedom, the synonym of equality, is from the very rudest state in which man can be imagined, the stimulus and condition of progress. Auguste Comte's idea that the institution of slavery destroyed cannibalism is as fanciful as Elia's humorous notion of the way man-

kind acquired a taste for roast pig. It assumes that a propensity that has never been found developed in man save as the result of the most unnatural conditions—the direst want or the most brutalizing superstitions*—is an original impulse, and that he, even in his lowest state the highest of all animals, has natural appetites which the nobler brutes do not show. And so of the idea that slavery began civilization by giving slave owners leisure for improvement.

Slavery never did and never could aid improvement. Whether the community consist of a single master and a single slave, or of thousands of masters and millions of slaves, slavery necessarily involves a waste of human power; for not only is slave labor less productive than free labor, but the power of masters is likewise wasted in holding and watching their slaves, and is called away from directions in which real improvement lies. From first to last, slavery, like every other denial of the natural equality of men, has hampered and prevented progress. Just in proportion as slavery plays an im-

* The Sandwich Islanders did honor to their good chiefs by eating their bodies. Their bad and tyrannical chiefs they would not touch. The New Zealanders had a notion that by eating their enemies they acquired their strength and valor. And this seems to be the general origin of eating prisoners of war.

portant part in the social organization does improvement cease. That in the classical world slavery was so universal, is undoubtedly the reason why the mental activity which so polished literature and refined art never hit on any of the great discoveries and inventions which distinguish modern civilization. No slave-holding people ever were an inventive people. In a slave-holding community the upper classes may become luxurious and polished; but never inventive. Whatever degrades the laborer and robs him of the fruits of his toil stifles the spirit of invention and forbids the utilization of inventions and discoveries even when made. To freedom alone is given the spell of power which summons the genii in whose keeping are the treasures of earth and the viewless forces of the air.

The law of human progress, what is it but the moral law? Just as social adjustments promote justice, just as they acknowledge the equality of right between man and man, just as they insure to each the perfect liberty which is bounded only by the equal liberty of every other, must civilization advance. Just as they fail in this, must advancing civilization come to a halt and recede. Political economy and social science cannot teach any lessons

that are not embraced in the simple truths that were taught to poor fishermen and Jewish peasants by One who eighteen hundred years ago was crucified—the simple truths which, beneath the warpings of selfishness and the distortions of superstition, seem to underlie every religion that has ever striven to formulate the spiritual yearnings of man.

## IV. Social Retrogression

THIS consideration of the law of human progress not only brings the politico-economic laws, which I have elsewhere worked out, within the scope of a higher law—perhaps the very highest law our minds can grasp; but it proves that the making of land values common property would give an enormous impetus to civilization, while the refusal to do so must entail retrogression. A civilization like ours must either advance or go back; it cannot stand still. It is not like those homogeneous civilizations, such as that of the Nile Valley, which molded men for their places and put them in it like bricks into a pyramid. It much more resembles that civilization whose rise and fall is within historic times, and from which it sprung.

There is just now a disposition to scoff at any implication that we are not in all respects progressing, and the spirit of our times is that of the edict which the flattering premier proposed to the Chinese

Emperor who burned the ancient books—"that all who may dare to speak together about the She and the Shoo be put to death; that those who make mention of the past so as to blame the present be put to death along with their relatives."

Yet it is evident that there have been times of decline, just as there have been times of advance; and it is further evident that these epochs of decline could not at first have been generally recognized.

He would have been a rash man who, when Augustus was changing the Rome of brick to the Rome of marble, when wealth was augmenting and magnificence increasing, when victorious legions were extending the frontier, when manners were becoming more refined, language more polished, and literature rising to higher splendors—he would have been a rash man who then would have said that Rome was entering her decline. Yet such was the case.

And whoever will look may see that though our civilization is apparently advancing with greater rapidity than ever, the same cause which turned Roman progress into retrogression is operating now.

What has destroyed every previous civilization has been the tendency to the unequal distribution

of wealth and power. This same tendency, operating with increasing force, is observable in our civilization to-day, showing itself in every progressive community, and with greater intensity the more progressive the community. Wages and interest tend constantly to fall, rent to rise, the rich to become very much richer, the poor to become more helpless and hopeless and the middle class to be swept away.

I have elsewhere traced this tendency to its cause and shown by what simple means this cause may be removed. I now wish to point out *how*, if this is not done, progress must turn to decadence, and modern civilization decline to barbarism, as have all previous civilizations. It is worth while to point out *how* this may occur, as many people, being unable to see how progress may pass into retrogression, conceive such a thing impossible. Gibbon, for instance, thought that modern civilization could never be destroyed because there remained no barbarians to overrun it, and it is a common idea that the invention of printing by so multiplying books has prevented the possibility of knowledge ever again being lost.

The conditions of social progress, as we have traced the law, are association and equality. The general tendency of modern development, since the

time when we can first discern the gleams of civilization in the darkness which followed the fall of the Western Empire, has been toward political and legal equality—to the abolition of slavery; to the abrogation of status; to the sweeping away of hereditary privileges; to the substitution of parliamentary for arbitrary government; to the right of private judgment in matters of religion; to the more equal security in person and property of high and low, weak and strong; to the greater freedom of movement and occupation, of speech and of the press. The history of modern civilization is the history of advances in this direction—of the struggles and triumphs of personal, political, and religious freedom. And the general law is shown by the fact that just as this tendency has asserted itself civilization has advanced, while just as it has been repressed or forced back civilization has been checked.

This tendency has reached its full expression in the American Republic, where political and legal rights are absolutely equal, and, owing to the system of rotation in office, even the growth of a bureaucracy is prevented; where every religious belief or non-belief stands on the same footing; where every boy may hope to be President, every man has an equal

voice in public affairs, and every official is mediately or immediately dependent for the short lease of his place upon a popular vote. This tendency has yet some triumphs to win in England, in extending the suffrage, and sweeping away the vestiges of monarchy, aristocracy, and prelacy; while in such countries as Germany and Russia, where divine right is yet a good deal more than a legal fiction, it has a considerable distance to go. But it is the prevailing tendency, and how soon Europe will be completely republican is only a matter of time, or rather of accident. The United States are therefore, in this respect, the most advanced of all the great nations, in a direction in which all are advancing, and in the United States we see just how much this tendency to personal and political freedom can of itself accomplish.

Now, the first effect of the tendency to political equality was to the more equal distribution of wealth and power; for, while population is comparatively sparse, inequality in the distribution of wealth is principally due to the inequality of personal rights, and it is only as material progress goes on that the tendency to inequality involved in the reduction of land to private ownership strongly ap-

pears. But it is now manifest that absolute political equality does not in itself prevent the tendency to inequality involved in the private ownership of land, and it is further evident that political equality, co-existing with an increasing tendency to the unequal distribution of wealth, must ultimately beget either the despotism of organized tyranny or the worse despotism of anarchy.

To turn a republican government into a despotism the basest and most brutal, it is not necessary formally to change its constitution or abandon popular elections. It was centuries after Cæsar before the absolute master of the Roman world pretended to rule other than by authority of a Senate that trembled before him.

But forms are nothing when substance has gone, and the forms of popular government are those from which the substance of freedom may most easily go. Extremes meet, and a government of universal suffrage and theoretical equality may, under conditions which impel the change, most readily become a despotism. For there despotism advances in the name and with the might of the people. The single source of power once secured, everything is secured. There is no unfranchised class to whom

appeal may be made, no privileged orders who in defending their own rights may defend those of all. No bulwark remains to stay the flood, no eminence to rise above it. They were belted barons led by a mitered archbishop who curbed the Plantagenet with Magna Charta; it was the middle classes who broke the pride of the Stuarts; but a mere aristocracy of wealth will never struggle while it can hope to bribe a tyrant.

And when the disparity of condition increases, so does universal suffrage make it easy to seize the source of power, for the greater is the proportion of power in the hands of those who feel no direct interest in the conduct of government; who, tortured by want and embruted by poverty, are ready to sell their votes to the highest bidder or follow the lead of the most blatant demagogue; or who, made bitter by hardships, may even look upon profligate and tyrannous government with the satisfaction we may imagine the proletarians and slaves of Rome to have felt, as they saw a Caligula or Nero raging among the rich patricians. Given a community with republican institutions, in which one class is too rich to be shorn of its luxuries, no matter how public affairs are administered, and another so poor that a few dollars

on election day will seem more than any abstract consideration; in which the few roll in wealth and the many seethe with discontent at a condition of things they know not how to remedy, and power must pass into the hands of jobbers who will buy and sell it as the Prætorians sold the Roman purple, or into the hands of demagogues who will seize and wield it for a time, only to be displaced by worse demagogues.

Where there is anything like an equal distribution of wealth—that is to say, where there is general patriotism, virtue, and intelligence—the more democratic the government the better it will be; but where there is gross inequality in the distribution of wealth, the more democratic the government the worse it will be; for, while rotten democracy may not in itself be worse than rotten autocracy, its effects upon national character will be worse. To give the suffrage to tramps, to paupers, to men to whom the chance to labor is a boon, to men who must beg, or steal, or starve, is to invoke destruction. To put political power in the hands of men embittered and degraded by poverty is to tie firebrands to foxes and turn them loose amid the standing corn; it is to put out the eyes of a Samson

and to twine his arms around the pillars of national life.

Even the accidents of hereditary succession or of selection by lot, the plan of some of the ancient republics, may sometimes place the wise and just in power; but in a corrupt democracy the tendency is always to give power to the worst. Honesty and patriotism are weighted, and unscrupulousness commands success. The best gravitate to the bottom, the worst float to the top, and the vile will only be ousted by the viler. While as national character must gradually assimilate to the qualities that win power, and consequently respect, that demoralization of opinion goes on which in the long panorama of history we may see over and over again transmuting races of freemen into races of slaves.

As in England in the last century, when Parliament was but a close corporation of the aristocracy, a corrupt oligarchy clearly fenced off from the masses may exist without much effect on national character, because in that case power is associated in the popular mind with other things than corruption. But where there are no hereditary distinctions, and men are habitually seen to raise themselves by corrupt qualities from the lowest places to wealth and power,

tolerance of these qualities finally becomes admiration. A corrupt democratic government must finally corrupt the people, and when a people become corrupt there is no resurrection. The life is gone, only the carcass remains; and it is left but for the plowshares of fate to bury it out of sight.

Now this transformation of popular government into despotism of the vilest and most degrading kind, which must inevitably result from the unequal distribution of wealth, is not a thing of the far future. It has already begun in the United States, and is rapidly going on under our eyes. That our legislative bodies are steadily deteriorating in standard; that men of the highest ability and character are compelled to eschew politics, and the arts of the jobber count for more than the reputation of the statesman; that voting is done more recklessly and the power of money is increasing; that it is harder to arouse the people to the necessity of reforms and more difficult to carry them out; that political differences are ceasing to be differences of principle, and abstract ideas are losing their power; that parties are passing into the control of what in general government would be oligarchies and dictatorships; are all evidences of political decline.

The type of modern growth is the great city. Here are to be found the greatest wealth and the deepest poverty. And it is here that popular government has most clearly broken down. In all the great American cities there is to-day as clearly defined a ruling class as in the most aristocratic countries of the world. Its members carry wards in their pockets, make up the slates for nominating conventions, distribute offices as they bargain together, and—though they toil not, neither do they spin—wear the best of raiment and spend money lavishly. They are men of power, whose favor the ambitious must court and whose vengeance he must avoid. Who are these men? The wise, the good, the learned—men who have earned the confidence of their fellow-citizens by the purity of their lives, the splendor of their talents, their probity in public trusts, their deep study of the problems of government? No; they are gamblers, saloon keepers, pugilists, or worse, who have made a trade of controlling votes and of buying and selling offices and official acts. They stand to the government of these cities as the Prætorian Guards did to that of declining Rome. He who would wear the purple, fill the curule chair, or have the fasces carried before him, must go or send his

messengers to their camps, give them donations and make them promises. It is through these men that the rich corporations and powerful pecuniary interests can pack the Senate and the bench with their creatures. It is these men who make School Directors, Supervisors, Assessors, members of the Legislature, Congressmen. Why, there are many election districts in the United States in which a George Washington, a Benjamin Franklin or a Thomas Jefferson could no more go to the lower house of a State Legislature than under the Ancient Régime a base-born peasant could become a Marshal of France. Their very character would be an insuperable disqualification.

In theory we are intense democrats. The proposal to sacrifice swine in the temple would hardly have excited greater horror and indignation in Jerusalem of old than would among us that of conferring a distinction of rank upon our most eminent citizen. But is there not growing up among us a class who have all the power without any of the virtues of aristocracy? We have simple citizens who control thousands of miles of railroad, millions of acres of land, the means of livelihood of great numbers of men; who name the Governors of sovereign States as they

name their clerks, choose Senators as they choose attorneys, and whose will is as supreme with Legislatures as that of a French King sitting in bed of justice. The undercurrents of the times seem to sweep us back again to the old conditions from which we dreamed we had escaped. The development of the artisan and commercial classes gradually broke down feudalism after it had become so complete that men thought of heaven as organized on a feudal basis, and ranked the first and second persons of the Trinity as suzerain and tenant-in-chief. But now the development of manufactures and exchange, acting in a social organization in which land is made private property, threatens to compel every worker to seek a master, as the insecurity which followed the final break-up of the Roman Empire compelled every freeman to seek a lord. Nothing seems exempt from this tendency. Industry everywhere tends to assume a form in which one is master and many serve. And when one is master and the others serve, the one will control the others, even in such matters as votes. Just as the English landlord votes his tenants, so does the New England mill owner vote his operatives.

There is no mistaking it—the very foundations of society are being sapped before our eyes, while we

ask, *how* is it possible that such a civilization as this, with its railroads, and daily newspapers, and electric telegraphs, should ever be destroyed? While literature breathes but the belief that we have been, are, and for the future must be, leaving the savage state further and further behind us, there are indications that we are actually turning back again toward barbarism. Let me illustrate: One of the characteristics of barbarism is the low regard for the rights of person and of property. That the laws of our Anglo-Saxon ancestors imposed as penalty for murder a fine proportioned to the rank of the victim, while our law knows no distinction of rank, and protects the lowest from the highest, the poorest from the richest, by the uniform penalty of death, is looked upon as evidence of their barbarism and our civilization. And so, that piracy, and robbery, and slave-trading, and black-mailing, were once regarded as legitimate occupations, is conclusive proof of the rude state of development from which we have so far progressed.

But it is a matter of fact that, in spite of our laws, any one who has money enough and wants to kill another may go into any one of our great centers of population and business, and gratify his desire, and

then surrender himself to justice, with the chances as a hundred to one that he will suffer no greater penalty than a temporary imprisonment and the loss of a sum proportioned partly to his own wealth and partly to the wealth and standing of the man he kills. His money will be paid, not to the family of the murdered man, who have lost their protector; not to the state, which has lost a citizen; but to lawyers who understand how to secure delays, to find witnesses, and get juries to disagree.

And so, if a man steal enough, he may be sure that his punishment will practically amount but to the loss of a part of the proceeds of his theft; and if he steal enough to get off with a fortune, he will be greeted by his acquaintances as a viking might have been greeted after a successful cruise. Even though he robbed those who trusted him; even though he robbed the widow and the fatherless; he has only to get enough, and he may safely flaunt his wealth in the eyes of day.

Now, the tendency in this direction is an increasing one. It is shown in greatest force where the inequalities in the distribution of wealth are greatest, and it shows itself as they increase. If it be not a return to barbarism, what is it? The failures of

justice to which I have alluded are only illustrative of the increasing debility of our legal machinery in every department. It is becoming common to hear men say that it would be better to revert to first principles and abolish law, for then in self-defense the people would form Vigilance Committees and take justice into their own hands. Is this indicative of advance or retrogression?

All this is matter of common observation. Though we may not speak it openly, the general faith in republican institutions is, where they have reached their fullest development, narrowing and weakening. It is no longer that confident belief in republicanism as the source of national blessings that it once was. Thoughtful men are beginning to see its dangers, without seeing how to escape them; are beginning to accept the view of Macaulay and distrust that of Jefferson.* And the people at large are becoming used to the growing corruption. The most ominous political sign in the United States to-day is the growth of a sentiment which either doubts the existence of an honest man in public office or looks on him as a fool for not seizing his opportunities. That is to say, the people themselves

* See Macaulay's letter to Randall, the biographer of Jefferson.

are becoming corrupted. Thus in the United States to-day is republican government running the course it must inevitably follow under conditions which cause the unequal distribution of wealth.

Where that course leads is clear to whoever will think. As corruption becomes chronic; as public spirit is lost; as traditions of honor, virtue, and patriotism are weakened; as law is brought into contempt and reforms become hopeless; then in the festering mass will be generated volcanic forces which shatter and rend when seeming accident gives them vent. Strong, unscrupulous men, rising up upon occasion, will become the exponents of blind popular desires or fierce popular passions, and dash aside forms that have lost their vitality. The sword will again be mightier than the pen, and in carnivals of destruction brute force and wild frenzy will alternate with the lethargy of a declining civilization.

I speak of the United States only because the United States is the most advanced of all the great nations. What shall we say of Europe, where dams of ancient law and custom pen up the swelling waters and standing armies weigh down the safety valves, though year by year the fires grow hotter underneath? Europe tends to republicanism under

conditions that will not admit of true republicanism —under conditions that substitute for the calm and august figure of Liberty the petroleuse and the guillotine!

Whence shall come the new barbarians? Go through the squalid quarters of great cities, and you may see, even now, their gathering hordes! How shall learning perish? Men will cease to read, and books will kindle fires and be turned into cartridges!

It is startling to think how slight the traces that would be left of our civilization did it pass through the throes which have accompanied the decline of every previous civilization. Paper will not last like parchment, nor are our most massive buildings and monuments to be compared in solidity with the rock-hewn temples and titanic edifices of the old civilizations.* And invention has given us, not merely the steam engine and the printing press, but petroleum, nitro-glycerine, and dynamite.

Yet to hint, to-day, that our civilization may possibly be tending to decline, seems like the wildness of pessimism. The special tendencies to which

* It is also, it seems to me, instructive to note how inadequate and utterly misleading would be the idea of our civilization which could be gained from the religious and funereal monuments of our time, which are all we have from which to gain our ideas of the buried civilizations.

I have alluded are obvious to thinking men, but with the majority of thinking men, as with the great masses, the belief in substantial progress is yet deep and strong—a fundamental belief which admits not the shadow of a doubt.

But any one who will think over the matter will see that this must necessarily be the case where advance gradually passes into retrogression. For in social development, as in everything else, motion tends to persist in straight lines, and therefore, where there has been a previous advance, it is extremely difficult to recognize decline, even when it has fully commenced; there is an almost irresistible tendency to believe that the forward movement which has been advance, and is still going on, is still advance. The web of beliefs, customs, laws, institutions, and habits of thought, which each community is constantly spinning, and which produces in the individual environed by it all the differences of national character, is never unraveled. That is to say, in the decline of civilization, communities do not go down by the same paths that they came up. For instance, the decline of civilization as manifested in government would not take us back from republicanism to constitutional monarchy, and thence to the feudal

system; it would take us to imperatorship and anarchy. As manifested in religion, it would not take us back into the faiths of our forefathers, into Protestantism or Catholicity, but into new forms of superstition, of which possibly Mormonism and other even grosser "isms" may give some vague idea. As manifested in knowledge, it would not take us toward Bacon, but toward the literati of China.

And how the retrogression of civilization, following a period of advance, may be so gradual as to attract no attention at the time; nay, how that decline must necessarily, by the great majority of men, be mistaken for advance, is easily seen. For instance, there is an enormous difference between Grecian art of the classic period and that of the lower empire; yet the change was accompanied, or rather caused by a change of taste. The artists who most quickly followed this change of taste were in their day regarded as the superior artists. And so of literature. As it became more vapid, puerile, and stilted, it would be in obedience to an altered taste, which would regard its increasing weakness as increasing strength and beauty. The really good writer would not find readers; he would be regarded as rude, dry, or dull. And so would the drama decline; not be-

cause there was a lack of good plays, but because the prevailing taste became more and more that of a less cultured class, who, of course, regard that which they most admire as the best of its kind. And so, too, of religion; the superstitions which a superstitious people will add to it will be regarded by them as improvements. While, as the decline goes on, the return to barbarism, where it is not in itself regarded as an advance, will seem necessary to meet the exigencies of the times.

For instance, flogging, as a punishment for certain offenses, has been recently restored to the penal code of England, and has been strongly advocated on this side of the Atlantic. I express no opinion as to whether this is or is not a better punishment for crime than imprisonment. I only point to the fact as illustrating how an increasing amount of crime and an increasing embarrassment as to the maintenance of prisoners might lead to a fuller return to the physical cruelty of barbarous codes. The use of torture in judicial investigations, which steadily grew with the decline of Roman civilization, it is thus easy to see, might, as manners brutalized and crime increased, be demanded as a necessary improvement of the criminal law.

Whether in the present drifts of opinion and taste there are as yet any indications of retrogression, it is not necessary to inquire; but there are many things about which there can be no dispute, which go to show that our civilization has reached a critical period, and that unless a new start is made in the direction of social equality, the nineteenth century may to the future mark its climax. These industrial depressions, which cause as much waste and suffering as famines or wars, are like the twinges and shocks which precede paralysis. Everywhere is it evident that the tendency to inequality, which is the necessary result of material progress where land is monopolized, cannot go much further without carrying our civilization into that downward path which is so easy to enter and so hard to abandon. Everywhere the increasing intensity of the struggle to live, the increasing necessity for straining every nerve to prevent being thrown down and trodden under foot in the scramble for wealth, is draining the forces which gain and maintain improvements. In every civilized country pauperism, crime, insanity, and suicides are increasing. In every civilized country the diseases are increasing which come from overstrained nerves, from insufficient nourishment, from

squalid lodgings, from unwholesome and monotonous occupations, from premature labor of children, from the tasks and crimes which poverty imposes upon women. In every highly civilized country the expectation of life, which gradually rose for several centuries, and which seems to have culminated about the first quarter of this century, appears to be now diminishing.*

It is not an advancing civilization that such figures show. It is a civilization which in its undercurrents has already begun to recede. When the tide turns in bay or river from flood to ebb, it is not all at once; but here it still runs on, though there it has begun to recede. When the sun passes the meridian, it can be told only by the way the short shadows fall; for the heat of the day yet increases. But as sure as the turning tide must soon run full ebb; as sure as the declining sun must bring darkness, so sure is it, that though knowledge yet increases and invention marches on, and new states are being settled, and cities still expand, yet civilization has begun to wane when, in proportion to population, we must build

* Statistics which show these things are collected in convenient form in a volume entitled "Deterioration and Race Education," by Samuel Royce, which has been largely distributed by the venerable Peter Cooper of New York. Strangely enough, the only remedy proposed by Mr. Royce is the establishment of Kindergarten schools.

more and more prisons, more and more almshouses, more and more insane asylums. It is not from top to bottom that societies die; it is from bottom to top.

But there are evidences far more palpable than any that can be given by statistics, of tendencies to the ebb of civilization. There is a vague but general feeling of disappointment; an increased bitterness among the working classes; a widespread feeling of unrest and brooding revolution. If this were accompanied by a definite idea of how relief is to be obtained, it would be a hopeful sign; but it is not. Though the schoolmaster has been abroad some time, the general power of tracing effect to cause does not seem a whit improved. The reaction toward protectionism, as the reaction toward other exploded fallacies of government, shows this.* And even the philosophic free-thinker cannot look upon that vast change in religious ideas that is now sweeping over the civilized world without feeling that this tremendous fact may have most momentous relations, which only the future can develop. For what is

* In point of constructive statesmanship—the recognition of fundamental principles and the adaptation of means to ends, the Constitution of the United States, adopted a century ago, is greatly superior to the latest State Constitutions, the most recent of which is that of California—a piece of utter botchwork.

going on is not a change in the form of religion, but the negation and destruction of the ideas from which religion springs. Christianity is not simply clearing itself of superstitions, but in the popular mind it is dying at the root, as the old paganisms were dying when Christianity entered the world. And nothing arises to take its place. The fundamental ideas of an intelligent Creator and of a future life are in the general mind rapidly weakening. Now, whether this may or may not be in itself an advance, the importance of the part which religion has played in the world's history shows the importance of the change that is now going on. Unless human nature has suddenly altered in what the universal history of the race shows to be its deepest characteristics, the mightiest actions and reactions are thus preparing. Such stages of thought have heretofore always marked periods of transition. On a smaller scale and to a less depth (for I think any one who will notice the drift of our literature, and talk upon such subjects with the men he meets, will see that it is sub-soil and not surface plowing that materialistic ideas are now doing), such a state of thought preceded the French revolution. But the closest parallel to the wreck of religious ideas now

going on is to be found in that period in which ancient civilization began to pass from splendor to decline. What change may come, no mortal man can tell, but that some great change *must* come, thoughtful men begin to feel. The civilized world is trembling on the verge of a great movement. Either it must be a leap upward, which will open the way to advances yet undreamed of, or it must be a plunge downward, which will carry us back toward barbarism.

## V. The Central Truth

THE truth which is clearly apparent in the rise and fall of nations and the growth and decay of civilizations accords with those deep-seated recognitions of relation and sequence that we denominate moral perceptions. This truth involves both a menace and a promise. It shows that the evils arising from the unjust and unequal distribution of wealth, which are becoming more and more apparent as modern civilization goes on, are not incidents of progress, but tendencies which must bring progress to a halt; that they will not cure themselves, but, on the contrary, must, unless their cause is removed, grow greater and greater, until they sweep us back into barbarism by the road every previous civilization has trod. But it also shows that these evils are not imposed by natural laws; that they spring solely from social maladjustments which ignore natural laws, and that in removing their cause we shall be giving an enormous impetus to progress.

The poverty which in the midst of abundance pinches and imbrutes men, and all the manifold evils which flow from it, spring from a denial of justice. In permitting the monopolization of the opportunities which nature freely offers to all, we have ignored the fundamental law of justice—for, so far as we can see, when we view things upon a large scale, justice seems to be the supreme law of the universe. But by sweeping away this injustice and asserting the rights of all men to natural opportunities, we shall conform ourselves to the law—we shall remove the great cause of unnatural inequality in the distribution of wealth and power; we shall abolish poverty; tame the ruthless passions of greed; dry up the springs of vice and misery; light in dark places the lamp of knowledge; give new vigor to invention and a fresh impulse to discovery; substitute political strength for political weakness; and make tyranny and anarchy impossible.

The reform I have proposed accords with all that is politically, socially, or morally desirable. It has the qualities of a true reform, for it will make all other reforms easier. What is it but the carrying out in letter and spirit of the truth enunciated in

the Declaration of Independence—the "self-evident" truth that is the heart and soul of the Declaration—"*That all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness!*"

These rights are denied when the equal right to land—on which and by which men alone can live—is denied. Equality of political rights will not compensate for the denial of the equal right to the bounty of nature. Political liberty, when the equal right to land is denied, becomes, as population increases and invention goes on, merely the liberty to compete for employment at starvation wages. This is the truth that we have ignored. And so there come beggars in our streets and tramps on our roads; and poverty enslaves men who we boast are political sovereigns; and want breeds ignorance that our schools cannot enlighten; and citizens vote as their masters dictate; and the demagogue usurps the part of the statesman; and gold weighs in the scales of justice; and in high places sit those who do not pay to civic virtue even the compliment of hypocrisy; and the pillars of the republic that we thought so strong already bend under an increasing strain.

We honor Liberty in name and in form. We set up her statues and sound her praises. But we have not fully trusted her. And with our growth so grow her demands. She will have no half service!

Liberty! it is a word to conjure with, not to vex the ear in empty boastings. For Liberty means Justice, and Justice is the natural law—the law of health and symmetry and strength, of fraternity and co-operation.

They who look upon Liberty as having accomplished her mission when she has abolished hereditary privileges and given men the ballot, who think of her as having no further relations to the everyday affairs of life, have not seen her real grandeur—to them the poets who have sung of her must seem rhapsodists, and her martyrs fools! As the sun is the lord of life, as well as of light; as his beams not merely pierce the clouds, but support all growth, supply all motion, and call forth from what would otherwise be a cold and inert mass all the infinite diversities of being and beauty, so is liberty to mankind. It is not for an abstraction that men have toiled and died; that in every age the witnesses of Liberty have stood forth, and the martyrs of Liberty have suffered.

We speak of Liberty as one thing, and of virtue, wealth, knowledge, invention, national strength and national independence as other things. But, of all these, Liberty is the source, the mother, the necessary condition. She is to virtue what light is to color; to wealth what sunshine is to grain; to knowledge what eyes are to sight. She is the genius of invention, the brawn of national strength, the spirit of national independence. Where Liberty rises, there virtue grows, wealth increases, knowledge expands, invention multiplies human powers, and in strength and spirit the freer nation rises among her neighbors as Saul amid his brethren—taller and fairer. Where Liberty sinks, there virtue fades, wealth diminishes, knowledge is forgotten, invention ceases, and empires once mighty in arms and arts become a helpless prey to freer barbarians!

Only in broken gleams and partial light has the sun of Liberty yet beamed among men, but all progress hath she called forth.

Liberty came to a race of slaves crouching under Egyptian whips, and led them forth from the House of Bondage. She hardened them in the desert and made of them a race of conquerors. The free spirit of the Mosaic law took their thinkers up to heights

where they beheld the unity of God and inspired their poets with strains that yet phrase the highest exaltations of thought. Liberty dawned on the Phenician coast, and ships passed the Pillars of Hercules to plow the unknown sea. She shed a partial light on Greece, and marble grew to shapes of ideal beauty, words became the instruments of subtlest thought, and against the scanty militia of free cities the countless hosts of the Great King broke like surges against a rock. She cast her beam on the four-acre farms of Italian husbandmen, and born of her strength a power came forth that conquered the world. They glinted from shields of German warriors, and Augustus wept his legions. Out of the night that followed her eclipse, her slanting rays fell again on free cities, and a lost learning revived, modern civilization began, a new world was unveiled; and as Liberty grew, so grew art, wealth, power, knowledge, and refinement. In the history of every nation we may read the same truth. It was the strength born of Magna Charta that won Crecy and Agincourt. It was the revival of Liberty from the despotism of the Tudors that glorified the Elizabethan age. It was the spirit that brought a crowned tyrant to the block that planted here the

seed of a mighty tree. It was the energy of ancient freedom that, the moment it had gained unity, made Spain the mightiest power of the world, only to fall to the lowest depth of weakness when tyranny succeeded liberty. See, in France, all intellectual vigor dying under the tyranny of the Seventeenth Century to revive in splendor as Liberty awoke in the Eighteenth, and on the enfranchisement of French peasants in the Great Revolution, basing the wonderful strength that has in our time defied defeat.

Shall we not trust her?

In our time, as in times before, creep on the insidious forces that, producing inequality, destroy Liberty. On the horizon the clouds begin to lower. Liberty calls to us again. We must follow her further; we must trust her fully. Either we must wholly accept her or she will not stay. It is not enough that men should vote; it is not enough that they should be theoretically equal before the law. They must have liberty to avail themselves of the opportunities and means of life; they must stand on equal terms with reference to the bounty of nature. Either this, or Liberty withdraws her light! Either this, or darkness comes on, and the very forces that progress has evolved turn to powers that work destruction. This

is the universal law. This is the lesson of the centuries. Unless its foundations be laid in justice, the social structure cannot stand.

Our primary social adjustment is a denial of justice. In allowing one man to own the land on which and from which other men must live, we have made them his bondsmen in a degree which increases as material progress goes on. This is the subtile alchemy that in ways they do not realize is extracting from the masses in every civilized country the fruits of their weary toil; that is instituting a harder and more hopeless slavery in place of that which has been destroyed; that is bringing political despotism out of political freedom, and must soon transmute democratic institutions into anarchy.

It is this that turns the blessings of material progress into a curse. It is this that crowds human beings into noisome cellars and squalid tenement houses; that fills prisons and brothels; that goads men with want and consumes them with greed; that robs women of the grace and beauty of perfect womanhood; that takes from little children the joy and innocence of life's morning.

Civilization so based cannot continue. The eternal laws of the universe forbid it. Ruins of dead

empires testify, and the witness that is in every soul answers, that it cannot be. It is something grander than Benevolence, something more august than Charity—it is Justice herself that demands of us to right this wrong. Justice that will not be denied; that cannot be put off—Justice that with the scales carries the sword. Shall we ward the stroke with liturgies and prayers? Shall we avert the decrees of immutable law by raising churches when hungry infants moan and weary mothers weep?

Though it may take the language of prayer, it is blasphemy that attributes to the inscrutable decrees of Providence the suffering and brutishness that come of poverty; that turns with folded hands to the All-Father and lays on Him the responsibility for the want and crime of our great cities. We degrade the Everlasting. We slander the Just One. A merciful man would have better ordered the world; a just man would crush with his foot such an ulcerous anthill! It is not the Almighty, but we who are responsible for the vice and misery that fester amid our civilization. The Creator showers upon us his gifts—more than enough for all. But like swine scrambling for food, we tread them in the mire—

tread them in the mire, while we tear and rend each other!

In the very centers of our civilization to-day are want and suffering enough to make sick at heart whoever does not close his eyes and steel his nerves. Dare we turn to the Creator and ask Him to relieve it? Supposing the prayer were heard, and at the behest with which the universe sprang into being there should glow in the sun a greater power; new virtue fill the air; fresh vigor the soil; that for every blade of grass that now grows two should spring up, and the seed that now increases fifty-fold should increase a hundred-fold! Would poverty be abated or want relieved? Manifestly no! Whatever benefit would accrue would be but temporary. The new powers streaming through the material universe could be utilized only through land. And land, being private property, the classes that now monopolize the bounty of the Creator would monopolize all the new bounty. Land owners would alone be benefited. Rents would increase, but wages would still tend to the starvation point!

This is not merely a deduction of political economy; it is a fact of experience. We know it because we have seen it. Within our own times,

under our very eyes, that Power which is above all, and in all, and through all; that Power of which the whole universe is but the manifestation; that Power which maketh all things, and without which is not anything made that is made, has increased the bounty which men may enjoy, as truly as though the fertility of nature had been increased. Into the mind of one came the thought that harnessed steam for the service of mankind. To the inner ear of another was whispered the secret that compels the lightning to bear a message round the globe. In every direction have the laws of matter been revealed; in every department of industry have arisen arms of iron and fingers of steel, whose effect upon the production of wealth has been precisely the same as an increase in the fertility of nature. What has been the result? Simply that land owners get all the gain. The wonderful discoveries and inventions of our century have neither increased wages nor lightened toil. The effect has simply been to make the few richer; the many more helpless!

Can it be that the gifts of the Creator may be thus misappropriated with impunity? Is it a light thing that labor should be robbed of its earnings while greed rolls in wealth—that the many should want

while the few are surfeited? Turn to history, and on every page may be read the lesson that such wrong never goes unpunished; that the Nemesis that follows injustice never falters nor sleeps! Look around to-day. Can this state of things continue? May we even say, "After us the deluge!" Nay; the pillars of the state are trembling even now, and the very foundations of society begin to quiver with pent-up forces that glow underneath. The struggle that must either revivify, or convulse in ruin, is near at hand, if it be not already begun.

The fiat has gone forth! With steam and electricity, and the new powers born of progress, forces have entered the world that will either compel us to a higher plane or overwhelm us, as nation after nation, as civilization after civilization, have been overwhelmed before. It is the delusion which precedes destruction that sees in the popular unrest with which the civilized world is feverishly pulsing only the passing effect of ephemeral causes. Between democratic ideas and the aristocratic adjustments of society there is an irreconcilable conflict. Here in the United States, as there in Europe, it may be seen arising. We cannot go on permitting men to vote and forcing them to tramp. We cannot go on

educating boys and girls in our public schools and then refusing them the right to earn an honest living. We cannot go on prating of the inalienable rights of man and then denying the inalienable right to the bounty of the Creator. Even now, in old bottles the new wine begins to ferment, and elemental forces gather for the strife!

But if, while there is yet time, we turn to Justice and obey her, if we trust Liberty and follow her, the dangers that now threaten must disappear, the forces that now menace will turn to agencies of elevation. Think of the powers now wasted; of the infinite fields of knowledge yet to be explored; of the possibilities of which the wondrous inventions of this century give us but a hint. With want destroyed; with greed changed to noble passions; with the fraternity that is born of equality taking the place of the jealousy and fear that now array men against each other; with mental power loosed by conditions that give to the humblest comfort and leisure; and who shall measure the heights to which our civilization may soar? Words fail the thought! It is the Golden Age of which poets have sung and high-raised seers have told in metaphor! It is the glorious vision which has always haunted

man with gleams of fitful splendor. It is what he saw whose eyes at Patmos were closed in a trance. It is the culmination of Christianity—the City of God on earth, with its walls of jasper and its gates of pearl! It is the reign of the Prince of Peace!

This monograph comprises the five chapters of Book X of "Progress and Poverty." A few verbal changes made by Louis F. Post at the request of the family of Henry George, have given it completeness in itself without otherwise altering the original text. "Progress and Poverty" may be purchased at any well-stocked bookstore in either cloth-bound or leather-bound editions, or in the 10-volume set of Henry George's complete works. It may be found also in any public library.

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